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House sending Trump impeachment to Senate, trial to follow

By LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House voted Wednesday to send two articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump to the Senate, delivery set for a dramatic procession across the U.S. Capitol for only the third such trial in American history.



In this image from video, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., speaks as the House of Representatives debates the impeachment managers resolution at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020.

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House sending Trump impeachment to Senate, trial to follow

Continued from Front

Trump complained anew of a "hoax," even as new details emerged about his efforts in Ukraine. The charges were to be carried in a ceremony of pomp and protocol by lawmakers prosecuting the case, moving the impeachment out of Speaker Nancy Pelosi's Democratic-run House to the Republican-majority Senate, where the president's team is mounting a defense aiming for swift acquittal.

Wednesday's mostly part-line House vote to deliver the charges was 228-193, reflecting the deeply divided nation at the start of this presidential election year. It came one month after the House impeached



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., center, flanked by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., left, and House Intelligence Committee Chairman Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., speaks during a news conference to announce impeachment managers on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020.

Associated Press

Trump alleging he abused his presidential power by pressuring Ukraine to investigate Democratic rival Joe Biden, using military aid to

the country as leverage. Trump was also charged with obstructing Congress' ensuing probe.

"We are here today to cross

a very important threshold in American history," Pelosi said, addressing the House before the vote.

"This is what an impeachment is about," she said earlier, announcing the prosecution team. "The president violated his oath of office, undermined our national security, jeopardized the integrity of our elections."

Trump's political campaign dismissed it all as "just a failed attempt to politically damage President Trump leading up to his reelection."

The Senate will transform itself into an impeachment court on Thursday. The Constitution calls on Chief Justice John Roberts to preside at the trial, administering the oath to senators who will serve as jurors and swear to deliver "impartial justice."

Opening arguments are to begin next Tuesday after the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

The top Republican in the House, Kevin McCarthy of California, said Americans will look back on this "sad saga" that tried to remove the president from office with the "weakest case."

The president's team expects acquittal with a Senate trial lasting no more than two weeks, according to senior administration officials unauthorized to discuss the matter and granted anonymity.

That's far shorter than the last presidential impeachment trail, of Bill Clinton, in 1999, or the first one, of Andrew Johnson, in 1868.

As Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell sets the rules for the trial, Trump has given mixed messages about whether he prefers lengthy or swift proceeding, and senators are under pressure with the emerging

new evidence to call more witnesses for testimony.

The seven-member prosecution team will be led by the chairmen of the House impeachment proceedings, Reps. Adam Schiff of the Intelligence Committee and Jerry Nadler of the Judiciary Committee, two of Pelosi's top lieutenants.

Ahead of Wednesday's session, Schiff released new records from Lev Parnas, an associate of Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, about the Ukraine strategy, including an exchange with another man about surveilling later-fired Ambassador Maria Yovanovitch.

Schiff said the new evidence should bring more pressure on McConnell, who is reluctant to allow witnesses to testify and also prefers swift acquittal.

"If McConnell makes this the first trial in history without witnesses, it will be exposed for what it is and that is an effort to cover up for the president," Schiff said.

McConnell opened the Senate dismissing what he called a rushed impeachment that is more about the politics of Democrats who don't like Trump than the charges against him.

"This isn't really about Ukraine policy or military money," McConnell said. "This has been naked partisanship all along."

Trump's trial will be only the third presidential impeachment trial in U.S. history, and it comes against the backdrop of a politically divided nation in an election year.

The managers are a diverse group with legal, law enforcement and military experience, including Ha-keem Jeffries of New York, Sylvia Garcia of Texas, Val Demings of Florida, Jason Crow of Colorado and Zoe Lofgren of California. □

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Judge refuses to toss ex-coal CEO Blankenship's conviction

By JOHN RABY
Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP)

— A federal judge in West Virginia on Wednesday refused to toss the misdemeanor conviction of former coal CEO Don Blankenship for conspiring to violate mine safety laws. U.S. District Judge Irene Berger in Beckley rejected a recommendation from a federal magistrate judge. Berger ruled that despite the prosecution's failure to disclose numerous documents to the defense during the discovery phase of Blankenship's trial, the con-

duct "resulted in no prejudice" toward Blankenship. At issue were dozens of witness statements, along with emails and disciplinary records from the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration, that Blankenship said were not disclosed to him and his attorneys. Blankenship "has failed to meet his burden to establish that a reasonable probability exists that the outcome of the trial might have been different had the suppressed evidence been disclosed prior to trial," Berger wrote. "Specifically, after thorough review, nothing



has been presented to undermine confidence in the jury's verdict." Former U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin, whose office handled Blankenship's prosecution, said in a statement that Berger's decision "was incredibly thorough, well-reasoned and reached the correct result. "It is clear that the Court was greatly aided by the fact that she was the presiding judge at trial and as such, she did not need to rely simply on the cold record and representations of the defendant, but could also rely on what she directly observed." □



In this Aug. 29, 2018, file photo, Don Blankenship listens to arguments in the West Virginia Supreme Court in Charleston, W.Va.

Associated Press

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Emphasis on U.S. exports, trade secrets in China trade deal

By **KEVIN FREKING** and **PAUL WISEMAN**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States and China reached a trade deal Wednesday that eases tensions between the world's two biggest economies, offers massive export opportunities for U.S. farms and factories, and promises to do more to protect American trade secrets.

Still, the Phase 1 agreement leaves unresolved Washington's fundamental differences with Beijing, which is relying on massive government intervention in the economy to turn China into a technological power.

President Donald Trump is wanting to show progress on an issue that he has made a hallmark of his presidency and hopes to use in his reelection campaign this year.

Wednesday's signing ceremony at the White House gave him the chance to do that just hours before the House voted to send articles of impeachment to the Senate for a trial.

"We mark more than just an agreement. We mark a sea change in international trade," Trump declared during a rambling ceremony in which he made references to former FBI Director James Comey, the impeachment proceedings and a possible visit to Mount Rushmore on July Fourth for a fireworks display.

The Chinese delegation also praised the pact. Chinese leader Xi Jinping said in a letter to Trump that the first-phase deal was "good for China, for the U.S. and for the whole world."

He said it also showed the two countries had the ability to "act on the basis of equality and mutual respect." The letter was read



President Donald Trump shakes hands with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He, after signing a trade agreement in the East Room of the White House, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020, in Washington.

Associated Press

by Beijing's chief negotiator, Vice Premier Liu He.

Some of the president's Democratic critics were unimpressed.

"True to form, Trump is getting precious little in return for the significant pain and uncertainty he has imposed on our economy, farmers, and workers," said former Vice President Joe Biden, one of the Democrats hoping to replace Trump.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said in a statement that "with the economy losing thousands of manufacturing jobs and Farm Country reeling from the damage caused by President Trump, Americans are left with nothing more than a showy television ceremony to try to hide the complete absence of concrete progress, transparency or accountability in this 'phase one' agreement."

The administration acknowledges the agreement leaves unresolved some U.S. complaints — most notably, the way the

Chinese government subsidizes its companies. That was the concern voiced when Trump sparked a trade war by imposing tariffs on Chinese imports in July 2018.

"The Phase 1 deal contains meaningful commitments but by no means lives up to the initial objectives of the administration," said Wendy Cutler, a former U.S. trade negotiator who is now vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute. Further Chinese concessions would force Beijing to make major changes in its state-dominated economic model, which means "the prospects for a timely conclusion are remote," she said.

The agreement leaves in place tariffs on about \$360 billion in Chinese imports, leverage the administration hopes will generate future concessions.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said work on follow-up negotiations will hinge on how China fulfills the commitments it

made in the initial phase.

"We have to make sure this is implemented properly," Lighthizer said.

"This is the first agreement like this of its kind and we have to make sure that it works."

The agreement is intended to ease some U.S. economic sanctions on China while

Beijing is to step up purchases of American farm products and other goods. Trump cited beef, pork, poultry, seafood, rice and dairy products as examples.

U.S. trade officials said the agreement would end a long-standing practice of China pressuring foreign companies to transfer technology to Chinese companies as a condition for obtaining market access. Lighthizer said China has also agreed to combat patent theft and counterfeit products, which would include forfeiting machinery used for making counterfeit products.

The 86-page agreement makes it easier to bring criminal cases in China against those accused of stealing trade secrets. It includes provisions designed to stop Chinese government officials from using administrative and regulatory procedures to ferret out foreign companies' trade secrets and allowing that information to get into the hands of Chinese competitors. □

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Northam declares state of emergency ahead of gun rally

By ALAN SUDERMAN
Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam announced Wednesday that he was declaring a state of emergency over threats of "armed militia groups storming our Capitol" ahead of a gun-rights rally next week. Northam's emergency order will ban weapons of all kinds, including firearms, from the Capitol grounds starting Friday and continuing through Tuesday. He said the order was necessary to protect public safety because of potential violence from out-of-state groups at a gun-rights rally scheduled for Monday. "Let me be clear. These are considered credible, serious threats by our law enforcement agencies," Northam said at a Capitol news conference. He added that some of the rhetoric used by groups planning to attend Monday's rally is similar to what was said in the lead-up to a deadly 2017 white nationalist rally in Charlottesville. "We will not allow that mayhem and violence to happen here." Monday is Martin Luther King Jr. Day and is known as "Lobby day" in Virginia politics as advocates for a number

of causes use the holiday to try and buttonhole lawmakers. It's also traditionally when pro-gun and gun-control advocates hold rallies. This year, law enforcement officials are expecting thousands of gun-rights advocates to attend a rally organized by the Virginia Citizens Defense League. The group said its lawyers are reviewing the governor's emergency declaration but did not have immediate additional comment. Republicans were mixed in their response. House Minority Leader Del. Todd Gilbert lamented that "there are legitimate concerns of a few bad actors hijacking the rally." But Republican Party of Virginia Chairman Jack Wilson condemned Northam's declaration. "Northam and the rest of the Virginia Democrats have made their session goal crystal clear: a disarmed, vulnerable, and subservient citizenry," Wilson said in a statement. The emergency declaration will mean road closures around the Capitol and limited access to the grounds, including a security checkpoint with metal detectors. Law enforcement leaders from the Capitol Police, Virginia State Police and Rich-



In this Jan. 8, 2020, file photo, Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, center, gestures as he delivers his State of the Commonwealth address as House Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn, D-Fairfax, right, and Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax, left, listen before a joint session of the Virginia Assembly at the state Capitol in Richmond, Va.

Associated Press

mond Police said public safety was their top priority and they would not tolerate any acts of violence. Virginia law enforcement officials have been criticized for their planning and response to the Charlottesville rally that involved heavily armed protesters. One woman was killed and several more were injured when a car plowed into a group of counterprotesters. Northam's declaration will also ban items like helmets and shields, items that some white nationalists carried in Charlottesville. Gun laws have become a dominant issue this legislative session and there's been a heavy police presence at the Capitol. Northam's planned announcement comes days after Democratic leaders used a special rules committee to ban guns inside

the Capitol and a legislative office building. That ban did not include Capitol grounds, which are under the governor's control. Democrats have full control of the statehouse for the first time in a generation and are set to pass a number of gun-control restrictions, including limiting handgun purchases to once a month and universal background checks on gun purchases. Republicans and gun-rights groups have pledged stiff resistance. Gun owners are descending on local government offices to demand they establish sanctuaries for gun rights. More than 100 counties, cities and towns have declared themselves Second Amendment sanctuaries and vowed to oppose any new "unconstitutional restrictions" on guns. □

3 who brought mortar round to gate at Pearl Harbor released

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLER
Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — A mortar round was found in a vehicle at a gate to the sprawling Pearl Harbor military base, shutting down the base for hours and leading three people to be taken into custody, military officials said Wednesday. It's not clear what the trio planned to do or where they wanted to go when they were stopped late Tuesday, base spokesman Charles Anthony said, but added, "I don't think their intention was to get on base."

A mortar is a portable weapon that is loaded and



In this Dec. 4, 2019 file photo security stand outside the main gate at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii.

Associated Press

fired by dropping an exploding shell into a tube. Anthony said there was no explosive material inside the round and no firing de-

vice in the car. It was an "inert training round," Naval Criminal Investigative Service spokesman Jeff Houston said in an

email. "NCIS does not believe that terrorism played any role in the gate incident yesterday and we don't believe there is any threat to the community," he wrote Wednesday. The vehicle's occupants were released Wednesday. No information was available about them, and it's not clear if they will face charges. Bringing weapons or ordnance onto the base requires coordinating with security, Anthony said. Hundreds of people, usually lost, end up at the Pearl Harbor gate daily and are turned around if they don't have proper identification to enter, he said. □

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Judge halts Trump's order allowing states to block refugees

By **MICHAEL KUNZELMAN**
and **JULIE WATSON**
Associated Press

SILVER SPRING, Md. (AP)

— A federal judge on Wednesday halted President Donald Trump's executive order that gave state and local officials the ability to shut the door on refugees, and ignited a fierce debate in communities about how welcoming the United States should be.

U.S. District Judge Peter Messitte in Maryland said in his ruling that the president's order "flies in the face of clear Congressional intent" of the 1980 Refugee Act by allowing state and local governments to block the resettlement of refugees in their jurisdictions.

In issuing a preliminary injunction, Messitte said the process should continue as it has for nearly 40 years, with refugee resettlement agencies deciding where a person would best thrive. Church World Service, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, and HIAS — a Jewish nonprofit — filed the lawsuit in Greenbelt, Maryland, on Nov. 21. They said they already work closely with state and local officials before resettling refugees in an area. They called the order an attempt at a state-by-state ban on refugees.

Messitte agreed. "It grants them veto power. Period," the judge wrote.

The Trump order, which was issued in September and had been set to go into ef-



In this Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020, file photo, Linda Evarts, an attorney for the International Refugee Assistant Project, speaks to the media outside the federal courthouse in Greenbelt, Md. **Associated Press**

fect in June, required agencies to get written consent from state and local officials before resettling refugees in their jurisdictions. Trump said he acted to respect communities that believe they do not have the jobs or other resources to be able to take in refugees. The administration didn't immediately say whether it will appeal Messitte's decision. The State Department said it is reviewing the decision and has no immediate comment.

The order was the latest attempt by the Trump administration to thrust states and cities into immigration policy. It caused heated de-

bates and raucous meetings in several towns from North Dakota to Tennessee, and put Republican governors in an uncomfortable position between immigration hardliners who want to shut the door and some Christian evangelicals who believe helping refugees is a moral obligation. Others say refugees are vital to fill jobs and keep rural communities afloat.

Trump has brought the order up on the campaign trail, getting big applause from supporters at a Minneapolis rally in October when he said: "As you know, for many years leaders in Washington brought

large numbers of refugees to your state from Somalia, without considering the impact to schools and communities and taxpayers. I promise you that as a president I will give communities local control."

The ruling comes less than a week after Texas became the first state to say it did not want more refugees.

Gov. Greg Abbott said in a letter released Jan. 10 that Texas, which took in more refugees than any other state during the 2018 fiscal year, "has been left by Congress to deal with disproportionate migration issues resulting from a broken federal immigration

system." Abbott's office did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment on Wednesday's ruling.

Refugees have the right to move anywhere in the U.S. after their initial resettlement, but at their own expense.

The head of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, said Trump's order was already causing "irreparable harm to refugee families." Agencies were forced to dedicate time and resources to getting written consents instead of focusing on efforts to help refugees integrate with language classes and job training.

Agencies have gotten consents from 42 states.

Mark Hetfield, the head of HIAS, estimated about 1,800 refugees this year will be resettled in Texas, where most have family members already, unless the Trump administration appeals the ruling and wins. Mayors from the state's major cities have welcomed them.

Ali Al Sudani, chief programs officer for Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston, said many refugees were anxious after Abbott's announcement. One Iraqi man contacted Al Sudani to say that he was in the process of being approved to go to Texas and asked whether he should request another state instead.

Al Sudani called Wednesday's ruling "great news." □

Student fatally shot at Texas high school; suspect arrested

BELLAIRE, Texas (AP) — A 19-year-old student was shot to death Tuesday at a Texas high school, and a suspect was arrested hours later, officials said.

Grenita Lathan, interim superintendent of the Houston Independent School District, confirmed the shooting victim at Bellaire High School had died. She gave no other information and took no questions.

A suspect and another person police said was connected to the case were arrested about 3 1/2

hours after the shooting Tuesday night, according to statements from the school district and Bellaire police. They said no other information would be released for now, including further details about where the shooting occurred in the school complex, whether the suspect was a student or what led to the arrest. The district announced classes had been canceled Wednesday, after Lathan originally said they were going on as scheduled. Emergency



Students watch from across the street as authorities respond to a shooting at Bellaire High School in Bellaire, Texas, Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020. **Associated Press**

crews were seen performing CPR as the student was carried on a stretcher to an ambulance outside the school, KPRC-TV reported. There were conflicting media reports about whether the shooting happened inside or outside the school. The city, a suburb south west of Houston, confirmed on Twitter that there was a shooting and said the suspect is still at large. It advised residents to avoid the area around the school or remain in their homes. □

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Adoptees can access birth certificates under new NY law

By **MARINA VILLENEUVE**
Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York has become the 10th state to allow adopted adults unrestricted access to their original birth certificates, a step that will help some people investigate their family histories.

A new law effective Wednesday does away with restrictions dating back to the 1930s that required an adoptee to seek a hard-to-get court order to access original birth records.

Those rules had originally been intended to protect the privacy of parents who relinquished their children. But attitudes about the rights of adopted individuals have shifted, while social media and DNA technology have made it easier for long-separated relatives to connect.

Restrictions in New York and nationwide dated back to a time when many women were coerced or shamed into giving up their babies, according to Joyce Bahr, who gave up her son for adoption in 1966 and now serves as president of the New York Statewide Adoption Reform's Unsealed Initiative, which pushed for New York's law.

"Times were different and we were also led to believe our children would go off and live happily ever after, which was a little far-fetched concept," she said. Bahr ended up reuniting with her biological son, Ed, when she relocated to New York. She said the two "loved each other right away."

"I can understand that there are some birth moth-



April Green, left, a public records aide, helps Joan Morgan, center, of Mt. Kisco, N.Y., and Joseph Pessalano, second from right, from the borough of Staten Island, as they file their pre adoption birth certificate application, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020, in New York.

Associated Press

ers who don't want to be found," Bahr said.

Some Catholic groups, adoption agencies, and some birth mothers and adoptive parents, had opposed lifting the privacy restrictions over fear about traumatizing people — including survivors of rape and incest — who had given up their children.

Staten Island resident Joe Pessalano, 58, is one of roughly 600,000 New Yorkers who advocates have estimated will be able to access their birth certificates starting Wednesday. "It's validation of my existence to actually see the certificate that has my original information on it," he said.

When he was 21, Joe's parents told him he was adopted as a 7-month-old infant in Long Island.

They gave him a piece of paper known as an adop-

tion decree, which happened to include his birth name: Christopher Anthony Ray. It's an important detail — often found on birth certificates — that gave him an edge over others in searching for birth parents. Pessalano said without knowing his birth name, he would have never been able to start a search that led him to his birth father, cousins and uncles.

"I would have waited until now," he said. "And I would have missed out on a wonderful father."

He ended up finding his birth parents in Greenwich Village in New York, where he had worked for several years as a paramedic. He discovered that his mother was baptized in a church on Christopher Street, while his father worked at a deli Pessalano had frequented.

"When I met him, oddly enough I looked at him

and thought, 'Gee he looks so familiar,'" Pessalano said. "I realized he worked in this deli. He worked there and would serve me my breakfast in the morning. I would remember him walking his dog in the street. It was so weird. It was so surreal." Pessalano said he's seen his birth mother only a handful of times since their first meeting in 1993. He said she's had a harder time accepting him — in contrast to his birth father, whom he met in 1990 and has since died.

"He was just amazing, he accepted me," Pessalano said.

Pessalano, who lobbied for similar legislation in New Jersey, said he's accepted his birth mother's perspective: "It's unfortunate, but that's what she wanted. I'm OK with it."

Greg Luce, attorney and founder of the Adoptee

Rights Law Center, based in Minnesota, said it was rare for New York courts to grant access to birth certificates, with exceptions being made occasionally in cases involving people with potentially genetic medical issues, or individuals seeking help with citizenship questions.

"It really was one of the top five most restrictive states in the country and had been that way since 1936," Luce said.

Concerns about privacy and confidentiality have long fueled opposition from groups including the National Council for Adoption, an adoption advocacy group first founded in 1980 in part to fight adoptees' access to birth records.

But president Chuck Johnson said the group's perspective has evolved as a growing body of research suggests the vast majority of women who place their children for adoption are open to reunions.

"As states have looked at laws to accommodate the majority, we've just asked folks to really take into account the wishes of the women who wish to maintain their privacy," Johnson said.

In New Jersey, a law allowed adult adoptees to request access to birth records starting in 2017. Birth parents had until the end of 2016 to redact information from their birth certificate.

Meanwhile, groups advocating for adoptee rights hope to fight similar legislation this year in West Virginia. They also hope to pass laws like New York's in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Maryland. □

Iran warning puts thousands of European troops in spotlight

By JOSEPH KRAUSS

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A warning by

Iran's president that European forces in the Middle East could be at risk if their nations join the U.S. pressure campaign against the Islamic Republic puts a focus on thousands of foreign troops in the region.

Britain, France, and Germany have spent months trying to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal after President Donald Trump unilaterally abandoned it in 2018.

But on Tuesday, the European Union initiated a dispute resolution mechanism to try to bring Iran back into compliance after Tehran began openly breaching some restrictions last summer.

Iran says it should not be bound to the agreement since the U.S. reimposed crippling sanctions. After a U.S. airstrike in Iraq killed Tehran's top general, Iran responded by firing ballistic missiles at U.S. troops stationed there. No one was hurt in the missile attacks.

"Today, the American soldier is in danger, tomorrow the European soldier could be in danger," President Hassan Rouhani said at a Cabinet meeting without elaborating.



In this Monday, May 27, 2019 file photo, NATO forces attend the graduation ceremony of Afghan National Army soldiers from a 3-month training program at the Afghan Military Academy in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Associated Press

European countries have troops in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East, where they mainly operate alongside much larger U.S. deployments. Iran is allied with powerful armed groups in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen.

A look at Europe's military presence:

IRAQ

Britain, France and Germany are all part of the U.S.-led coalition that is fighting the Islamic State group.

Britain has about 400 troops based in Iraq while Germany has nearly 450 troops deployed to counter IS and to train Iraqi forces.

Germany "temporarily" withdrew 35 of its troops from Iraq after Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani was killed on Jan. 3 in the U.S. drone strike. Most were flown to Jordan, where Germany also has troops involved in reconnaissance and refueling flights for the anti-IS coalition. France has

about 1,000 troops in the region to help combat IS in Iraq and Syria.

The European Union as a bloc has several dozen personnel in Baghdad working on security sector reform and advising the Interior Ministry. European Commission spokesman Peter Stano said officials are aware of the threats, but that "we, as the EU, are not leaving Iraq."

THE GULF

Britain operates a naval base in Bahrain that can house up to 500 British military personnel and is focused on maritime security. It also has a joint training base in Oman. France has a naval base known as Camp Peace in Abu Dhabi's Port Zayed, which houses some 700 French troops. Britain and France also station troops at U.S. bases in the region.

AFGHANISTAN

The NATO mission in Afghanistan consists of about 17,000 troops from 39 allied and partner countries. The alliance formally concluded its combat mission at the end of 2014 and provides advice and training to Afghan forces. Britain has nearly 1,000 troops in Afghanistan and Germany has about 1,100.

LEBANON

Several European countries contribute forces to the U.N. peacekeeping mission in southern Lebanon, which patrols the tense frontier between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group. France contributes about 700 troops.

Germany provides more than 100 forces to the peacekeepers' maritime mission. □

Groups: Syrian planes strike market in rebel area, 15 dead

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian government warplanes struck a market and an industrial area Wednesday in the last territory in the hands of rebel groups in the country's northwest, killing at least 15 people, opposition activists said.

A new cessation of hostilities agreement between Russia and Turkey, who support the opposite sides in the conflict, went into effect last week. But violence has continued.

Yahya Abu al-Yaman, a volunteer with first responders the Syrian Civil Defense, said 15 people were killed and 65 were wounded in the strike.

Most were in critical condition after warplanes struck a vegetable market and industrial area in Idlib city Wednesday afternoon. The two areas are a few hundreds meters (yards) apart. The Syrian Civil Defense, also known as the White Helmets, said one of its volunteers was killed in the strike. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the two areas were crowded with people when the warplanes struck. It also put the death toll at 15.

The Observatory said airstrikes were also reported in other parts of Idlib province, recording at least 42

Russian raids and 33 by government warplanes. The Observatory has a network of activists on the ground and has been monitoring the war in Syria since it began in 2011.

The government also launched several barrel bombs from helicopters in rural Idlib, according to the Observatory. The bombs are rudimentary and inaccurate projectiles that cause massive destruction. Russia is a main backer of Syrian President Bashar Assad, while Turkey is a strong supporter of some of the insurgents fighting against him. Moscow blamed the insurgents



This photo provided by the Syrian Civil Defense White Helmets, which has been authenticated based on its contents and other AP reporting, shows Syrian White Helmet civil defense workers extinguish a burning car that was hit by Syrian government airstrikes, in Idlib province, Syria, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020.

Associated Press

for violating the truce Saturday. Idlib is controlled by armed rebel groups, including Turkey-backed opposition groups and al-Qaida-linked militants who are the strongest there.

It is also home to 3 million civilians. The United Nations said at least 300,000 have been displaced by the violence in the month between Dec. 1 and Jan. 1. □



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Grrrrr! Angry herders secure bear ban from France's Macron

By **JOHN LEICESTER**
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The bears have cute names — Bubble, Feather, Snowflake and the like — and look so soft and huggable when caught on video by remote cameras that study their habits. But to herders high in the Pyrenees mountains of southwest France, the animals are stone-cold killers, ravaging flocks and undermining farming livelihoods.

Pyrenean livestock farmers who raise sheep for meat and famously pungent cheeses are rejoicing after getting an assurance from President Emmanuel Macron that he won't authorize the release into the wild of any more of the bears blamed for a surge in deadly attacks.

"He promised that the reinsertions (of bears) are finished, that he won't release any more," said Jean-Pierre Pommies, who raises sheep and cows. Pommies wore his broad farmer's beret to Tuesday's meeting with the suit-and-tied Macron in Pau, a Pyrenean town with sweeping views of the mountains.

"He was able to understand that it's a big problem for us," Pommies added. "We have reached the bottom, and the situation was ridiculous for Pyrenean herders." When France's last pocket of brown bears appeared headed for extinction in the Pyrenees in the 1990s, the country began importing animals from Slovenia, where the population is booming. A total of eight were freed into the wild in 1996, 1997 and 2006. Another release of two Slovenian female bears — Claverina and Sorita — followed in 2018, the first full year of Macron's presidency.

The population is now esti-

ated at around 40 bears, doubling its size since 2010 and roaming over a long

off with their knives. For us shepherds, that is traumatic."

source of tension between herders and those opposed to the deployment

Around 170 bears were shot in 2019, said Damjan Orazem, the Forest Service director.

Herders including Pommies pounced on Macron to talk about the Pyrenees' bears when the French leader turned up at the Tour de France last year on a day when the bicycle race swung through the peaks. Pommies said he threatened to release his animals into the riders' path unless Macron agreed to a meeting. That brief encounter elicited a pledge from Macron that he'd hold talks with them at length at a later date, an offer he made good on this week.

Emmanuelle Wargon, a deputy environment minister who attended the meeting, told broadcaster Sud Radio that Macron "reaffirmed that we don't have any plans to reintroduce (more) bears," adding: "It was important to tell them this."

For bear preservationists, herders are greatly exaggerating the risk posed by the predators. Alain Reynes, director of the group Country of the Bear, said he believes the actual number of animals killed by bears is far smaller than the 1,500, mostly sheep, that Pyrenean herders claim they lost last year.

Reynes also said that Macron's moratorium on bear releases can't last, because France is obliged by European law to ensure that the bear population remains viable.

"The president can only speak for the period of his mandate," he said. "There have always been bears. The history in the Pyrenees is one of cohabitation, even if it hasn't always been easy. ... There have been bears in Europe for 250,000 years. This is their space." □



In this Sept. 2, 2019 file photo, shepherd Romain Jauriguetberry brings dead sheep to sub-prefecture of Bayonne, southwestern France, to protests against the rising bear attacks on sheep herds in Pyrenees mountains.

Associated Press

and expanding swath of the mountains that form the border between France and Spain, stretching from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic.

Bear attacks on livestock have grown, too. Having long been largely stable, mostly between 100 and 200 attacks per year across the Pyrenees, including Spain, France and Andorra, they surged to close to 400 in 2018, according to the most recent official annual report.

Herders who suffered included one of Pommies' friends, whose flock was devastated in an attack last year, he said. The sheep took fright and plunged off a cliff together.

"There were 256 piled up at the bottom," he said. "They had to finish some of them

He believes the presence of the predators is simply "incompatible" with the Pyrenean mountain economy that rests largely on herding.

"I love bears. I'm passionate about them as animals. But I love that they live happily in Yellowstone, in Canada, in Romania and Slovenia," he said. In the Pyrenees, "the people who are pro-bear say that it used to work for the old timers, that they used to deal with it. And that is completely false. History shows that men have always killed them."

The Pyrenees are only one of the battlegrounds in Europe over efforts to preserve wild fauna and flora. In France's other major mountain range, the Alps, wild wolves that also prey on flocks are a persistent

of large dogs to keep wolf packs at bay.

In Germany, wolves have been a source of political friction. The far-right opposition Alternative for Germany party accused the government of failing to defend farmers' interests against the 75 wolf packs counted there in 2018. There is also debate in Belgium about the reappearance of wolves after infrared cameras spotted a pair together in woods and a pregnant wolf was killed in northern Belgium last summer.

Slovenia's brown bear population is so plentiful that authorities are culling the animals that are becoming a headache for farmers, raiding beehives and even attacking people in the small Alpine state.



Pope Francis meets people during his weekly general audience, in Paul VI Hall at the Vatican, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020.
Associated Press

Pope names 1st woman manager in Vatican Secretariat of State

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis has tapped an Italian lawyer to be the first woman to hold a management position in the Vatican's most important office, the Secretariat of State. Francis on Wednesday named Francesca Di Giovanni, a 27-year veteran of the Vatican, as undersecretary for multilateral affairs. In that role, she will be responsible for running a division that coordinates the Holy See's relations with the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations. Francis has called for women to be given greater decision-making roles in the Vatican and the Catholic Church at large, though no women head a Vatican congregation or other important office. Such leadership positions are reserved for priests,

bishops or cardinals, and Francis has upheld church teaching prohibiting the ordination of women. Di Giovanni, 66, told the Vatican's in-house media that Francis' appointment showed his attention to women, and she agreed with the pope's oft-stated assertion that women have certain aptitudes as peace-makers, mediators and healers. A few other women hold a similar rank in other Vatican offices, including the undersecretary at the Vatican's congregation for religious orders and two undersecretaries in the Vatican office for laity. But the Secretariat of State is the most powerful Vatican office, coordinating the internal work of the Holy See bureaucracy as well as the Vatican's diplomatic relations with other countries. □

Hungary police seek drug dealing charges against 2 Dutch men

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — Hungarian police on Wednesday recommended filing drug dealing charges against two Dutch men arrested in August at a popular music festival. Budapest police said they found 20 kilograms of pre-rolled marijuana cigarettes and ecstasy pills with a street value of around 100 million fo-

rints (\$335,000), most of it stashed away in a small van they were using and which was parked outside the festival grounds. While the suspects had a key to the car in their possession, they refused to reveal its location to police, who only found the vehicle following their detention and after consulting with their Dutch colleagues. □



A girl walks across a bridge in Belgrade, Serbia, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020.

Associated Press

Anger, emergency measures in smog-stifled Balkan cities

By **JOVANA GEC**
Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP)

— Major cities in a series of Balkan countries have been hit by dangerous levels of smog in recent days, prompting anger among residents and official warnings to stay indoors and avoid physical activity. Serbia's government called an urgent meeting to address the problem Wednesday, shortly after a peak in weekend air pollution levels prompted emergency measures in Bosnia's capital, Sarajevo. A report last year by the U.N. Environment Program said Sarajevo has some of Europe's highest air pollution concentrations, while on average people living in the Western Balkans lose up to 1.3 years of life to air pollution.

Croatian police on Wednesday also urged citizens in the capital, Zagreb, to use public transport and avoid bikes or scooters. High concentrations of toxic air particles are typical during winter in Balkan countries that largely depend on coal-fueled power plants, and where people drive old cars and use wood and coal for heating. In recent days, windless weather conditions

and thick fog have exacerbated the problem.

While dozens of towns and cities throughout the region are suffering, the worst hit has been Sarajevo, built in a deep valley ringed by mountains.

For most of the past week, Sarajevo's levels of airborne PM10 particulate matter have been at least twice — and sometimes eight times — higher than the European Union safety limit.

The soaring pollution has angered environmental activists in both Bosnia and Serbia, who say authorities are doing too little too late. "The air we breathe is poisoning and killing us," Dobrica Veselinovic, from the Do Not Drown Belgrade group, wrote in an open letter this week demanding the resignation of Belgrade's mayor. "Why isn't anyone doing anything?"

Belgrade has been wrapped for days in a cloud of smog that particularly afflicted lower-lying areas. The city health authorities' web page carried an alert Wednesday with the succinct warning: "The air in Belgrade is polluted!" But government health officials advised against panic. They attribute the problem to a combination of inefficient energy con-

sumption, outdated industrial equipment and use of fossil fuels in winter, including low-quality brown coal. Experts have warned that these and other environmental setbacks could even stall efforts by Serbia and other Balkan countries to join the European Union. In Bosnia, activists have blasted the government for relying on short-term measures during the crisis days — such as banning diesel vehicles and recommending the use of face masks — while not dealing with key issues, such as the proliferation of tall buildings that block the air flow.

The Swedish embassy to Bosnia warned this weekend on Twitter that Sarajevo was "in a category of its own when it comes to bad air quality."

Sarajevo authorities have cut ticket prices for the city's cable car that leads to the nearby Trebevic mountain, as residents head for popular ski resorts to avoid pollution.

In EU member Croatia, police said the bloc's air pollution standards were exceeded in part of Zagreb on Wednesday.

A police statement urged citizens to avoid open-air activity and cut down on smoking. □



Almir Vicente pushes his recently bought bottled water at a supermarket in the Copacabana neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020.

Associated Press

Smelly Rio de Janeiro water supply has residents on edge

By DAVID BILLER and DIANE JEANTET
Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — There's a creeping sense of alarm in Rio de Janeiro after more than a week of foul tasting and smelling tap water in dozens of neighborhoods. Rumors are flying, and residents are hoarding bottled water.

People in the metropolitan area have taken to social media to show glasses of water that appears reddish or brownish. Several supermarkets visited by the Associated Press on Wednesday had run out of bottled water.

There have been rumors — denied by officials — that the state water utility, Cedae, would cut off supply of water to millions of residents, or that tests have determined the water unfit for consumption.

Mariana Bretas, 29, received a viral text message saying people must plug their ears with cotton when showering.

"I don't know if it's true, but we're getting scared," Bretas said after buying five liters of water.

Cedae has said the peculiar water is due to geosmin, an organic compound that is innocuous, and that the water meets health ministry requirements. Even so, it said it will begin using powdered activated carbon at the start of treatment to curb geosmin.

At a press conference on Wednesday, Cedae officials reiterated that geosmin was the cause of the smell and taste, and insisted there was "nothing alarming" about its levels in the city's water reserves.

The number of cases of diarrhea, gastroenteritis and vomiting in two health clinics of Rio's west zone doubled between Dec. 20 and Jan. 5 over the same period last year, but it's too early to associate higher

incidence of symptoms with contaminated water, particularly after holiday season parties, the state health secretariat said in an emailed statement.

Rio Gov. Wilson Witzel's patience has worn thin; On Tuesday night he called for analysis of the water's quality as well as of the utility's management.

"The disorder the population has been suffering due to the problem with water provided by Cedae is inadmissible," Witzel said on Twitter. "The company must accelerate its ultimate solution to improve water quality and sewage treatment in cities near the springs. The consumer cannot be harmed."

Maurício Oliveira da Silva, a 51-year-old resident of Complexo de Alemão, a group of slums in Rio's north zone, said colored water had been coming out of the tap for several days until it improved on Wednesday. Still, he accused the government of lack of interest in some of the state's most desolate areas.

"We feel abandoned," da Silva said, adding that poorer folks like himself couldn't afford to buy gallons of bottled water. "We feel powerless."

As for the water's color, Cedae officials on Wednesday attributed it to the piping systems of individual homes, something for which the company can't be held responsible.

"In my house, I always drink Cedae's water," the company's president Helio Cabral assured journalists.

Cabral denied media reports that the head of the water treatment station that provides water to Rio's Baixada Fluminense area had been dismissed. It said he'd merely changed departments under a previously scheduled move. □



Opposition leader Juan Guaidó, center, sits with fellow lawmakers Juan Pablo Guanipa, left, and Carlos Eduardo Berrizbeitia as they hold a session at a theater in the El Hatillo neighborhood after their vehicles were attacked by government supporters while driving to the National Assembly in downtown Caracas, Venezuela, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020.

Associated Press

Government backers block Venezuela legislative meeting

By FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ and SCOTT SMITH

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— Government security forces and armed motorcycle groups loyal to Venezuela's president forcefully blocked opposition lawmakers from entering the National Assembly building Wednesday, prompting them to hold their session on the outskirts of the crisis-torn nation's capital.

It's the second time this month that lawmakers have been barred from the building that houses the only branch of government that remains out of control of President Nicolás Maduro's socialist government. Attempting to reach the legislative chamber, the caravan of cars carrying the deputies dodged through downtown streets, but ultimately failed.

Gunshots could be heard near the cars, but no injuries were reported. Two SUV's carrying the lawmakers came under attack by people on the street dressed in civilian clothes. They struck the rear window of one, shattering it. Guaidó called it an "ambush" carried out by the military and paramilitary groups armed by a "brutal and wild" dictatorship.

Guaidó was not in the caravan that attempted to enter the legislative building, but later emerged with

other lawmakers at a theater in the Caracas suburb of El Hatillo.

"Today, we clearly reject before the world this attack, this ambush against the Federal Palace," Guaidó said, referring to the legislative building. "The dictatorship has clearly exposed itself to the world."

The incident was part of a struggle for control of the opposition-dominated National Assembly and Venezuela as a whole, a nation suffering economic and social collapse that's led an estimated 4.5 million to emigrate. A once oil-wealthy nation, Venezuela has been locked in a political, economic and social collapse for the last five years. Basic medicines, food and gasoline are scarce, despite the fact Venezuela sits atop the world's largest oil reserves. The 36-year-old Guaidó leaped onto Venezuela's political stage a year ago when he declared himself acting president under the constitution and vowed to end Maduro's rule. The United States and more than 50 other nations quickly backed him, saying Maduro's reelection in 2018 was illegitimate.

Guaidó was also blocked from the National Assembly building early this month in a failed government attempt to prevent him from being reelected as the body's leader. □



Alberto Perez, a 77-year-old retired man, leaves his home in the Sevillano neighborhood with an empty cooking gas tank as he departs for a shop where he will replace it with a full one in Havana, Cuba, Tuesday, Jan 14, 2020.

Associated Press

Cuba warns citizens to prepare for cooking-gas shortages

By **MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN** and **ANDREA RODRIGUEZ**
Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — The Cuban government is warning citizens to prepare for shortages of cooking gas due to Trump administration sanctions on the island. State media announced Tuesday morning that cylinders of liquid petroleum gas would be scarce for Cubans who buy state-subsidized gas at about 30 cents per cylinder as well as for customers who buy gas at market prices more than 10 times higher.

Many homes in Cuba depend on bottled gas because they are not connected to municipal gas lines. Electric stoves and hotplates are relatively rare and expensive to use due to high electricity prices.

"I'll have to adapt, use an electric cooking pot and hope that things get better," said Angela Leon, a 60-year-old housewife. "It's a great injustice because it's already hard to put food on the table. I hope the U.S. government is aware that what they're doing to us is unjustified."

The government said in an announcement on state media that a Trump administration sanction announced in November against Cuban state energy company Corporación Panamericana had forced the cancellation of planned purchases of liquid petroleum gas.

"Current inventories don't cover consumption, affecting the sale of subsidized and free-market LPG, which can only be guaranteed for locations that provide basic services to the population," the announcement read. "The people should adopt measures to save gas and use it efficiently."

The Trump administration has been regularly tightening the trade embargo on Cuba with the stated aim of pressuring the country to give up its close relationship with Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, whom the U.S. wants out of office.

The U.S. last week banned charter flights from the U.S. to cities outside Havana, the latest pressure meant to cut off the flow of hard currency and energy to Cuba. □



Alena L. Leeds, a scientist from the United States Geological Survey, operates earthquake monitoring and recording equipment amid aftershocks across the island's southern coast where recent quakes have toppled homes and schools in Ponce, Puerto Rico, Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020.

Associated Press

Experts seek answers behind constant quakes in Puerto Rico

By **DANICA COTO**
Associated Press
PONCE, Puerto Rico (AP)

— Seismologists in southern Puerto Rico gingerly walked around a patch of dirt that marks the location of recently buried sensors they hope will reveal answers behind the constant and unusual shaking in the region that has terrified residents.

Alena Leeds with the U.S. Geological Survey stopped in front of the sensors on Tuesday afternoon and scrutinized the information that popped up on the screen in front of her.

"Here comes one! There's an aftershock," she said as the software showed red, blue and green lines that squiggled up and down.

More than 1,280 earthquakes have hit Puerto Rico's southern region since Dec. 28, more than two dozen of them magnitude 4.5 or greater, according to the USGS.

Among them was a 6.4 magnitude quake that hit on Jan. 7, killing one person and injuring nine others, and a 5.9 magnitude aftershock that occurred Saturday, causing further damage.

Government officials say the quakes have caused a preliminary \$110 million

in damage, toppled part of a famed rock formation landmark and damaged or destroyed more than 550 homes.

The seismic activity that experts say is unusual but not unexpected has unleashed scientific debate about what's causing it and drawn international attention to the area, where more than 4,000 people have sought shelter as they wonder when the ground will stop trembling.

"I don't plan on stepping foot in the house for any reason until this stops," said Adrián Santos, a 45-year-old mechanic who has been living in a tent in the southern coastal city of Ponce for nearly a week with nine other relatives. "The shaking is unbearable." Scientists say they don't yet know much about the faults causing the quakes, although some experts believe at least three faults are involved, including the Punta Montalva one in southwest Puerto Rico that students and professors at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez discovered in the early 2000s.

"There are a lot of different opinions but not a lot of data," said Elizabeth Vanacore, an associate research professor at the

university, which also houses the island's Seismic Network.

Overall, Puerto Rico is located in a very seismically active area, with the North America and Caribbean tectonic plates converging at a rate of about 2 centimeters a year, said Gavin Hayes, a USGS research geophysicist.

To the north part of the island, the North America plate is moving past and sinking below Puerto Rico, while in the southern region, the Caribbean plate is sinking into the mantle underneath the island.

"Essentially, the island is being squeezed between these two tectonic plates," he said.

In the last 50 years, 10 earthquakes of magnitude 4 and higher have occurred within 50 kilometers of the recent 6.4 magnitude epicenter prior to Dec. 28, said Lindsay Davis, with USGS's earthquake disaster assistance team manager.

She said the rate of aftershocks following the 6.4 magnitude quake is higher than expected, but still within normal range. She also said Saturday's 5.9 magnitude quake was within the range of what was expected for the aftershock sequence. □

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It's Carnival!

The streets of Oranjestad were filled with lights the first Saturday of January. The official opening of the carnival season took off with the Torch Parade. 10 carnival groups participated, each with their own theme in outfit. The Torch Parade is an easy going parade where the costumes are mostly decorated T-shirts in certain colors. But.... This is just a warming up for the most colorful, creative, inspiring parades that are to come.

The island is known for its white-sanded beaches and perfect climate, but there is one time in the year that Aruba draws thousands of visitors: carnival.

If you have never been here before, come in carnival season as your experience will be amazing. Sensational musical events, queen elections and different parades are all part of this spectacular phenomenon. Carnival is part of Aruba's history and cultural heritage, actually it is the largest cultural festival on the island. For the islanders it is a way to express their creativity and break away from the daily buzz of life. Dancing to the rhythm of local music while enjoying the ambiance of the public are some of the ingredients of this festival. Oranjestad and San Nicolas are the stages for this display of unique designed costumes, amazing ambience and upbeat, local music.



tumes, amazing ambience and upbeat, local music.

The festival is for everybody accessible and safe to visit. Behind the screens there is an enormous organization that makes sure that this festival runs smoothly. The police, inspection department, Red Cross volunteers, garbage service and many others work day and night to make sure that carnival is a success. All the trailers are being carefully inspected before they are allowed to participate as well as the vehicles that pull them. After each parade the streets are being cleaned and road blocks are being taken away so next day normal traffic flow occurs. The several organizations and institutions work together with

the official carnival organization SMAC.

History

In the 1920's the first carnival events were organized by social clubs that started private costume and masquerade parties. This year we celebrate Aruba's 66th carnival, which means that the first grand parade took place in 1955. Since then Aruba's carnival has grown big and is now able to stand shoulder to shoulder with the most renowned Carnival celebrations around the world.

For more information you can visit Facebook page SMAC, the official carnival organization. □





Aruba Timeshare Association partners up with the Happy Community Initiative



EAGLE BEACH — Luigi Heredia is the President of the Aruba Timeshare Association (ATSA) and also General Manager of the Costa Linda Beach Resort. Together with CEDE Aruba, a dynamic community foundation and supporting nonprofits in Aruba since 1986, they launched Aruba's Visitor Charity Program. This is a new platform for all visitors who would like to give a little bit of kindness to our community. The first digital donation kiosks in the Caribbean are inaugurated for this reason, among others at the Costa Linda Beach Resort, Playa Linda Beach Resort and Casa del Mar Beach Resort & Timeshare.

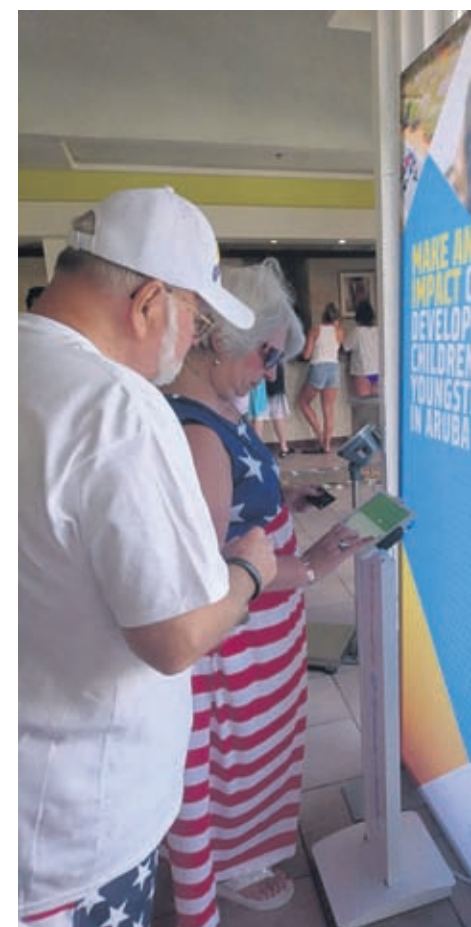
Heredia explained to a handful of guests of the resort what this Happy Community Initiative is about and how easy it actually is to make a donation by using the kiosk or through the website www.happycommunityaruba.org. In addition, some resorts will offer the possibility to make a donation at the checkout. Daniel Tecklenborg is the director of CEDE Aruba, and they initiated this visitor charity program that is also endorsed by the Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA). This will be a platform for all visitors who would like to make a donation, but also volunteer in the future. The priority is set to support projects for the Aruban youth. CEDE Aruba will make sure that the donations reach meaningful projects of local non-profits and upon quality and transparent finances of the offered programs. This way you can be assured that your donation will hit its goal!



How does it help Aruban youth

Millions of people around the world love Aruba, the ONE HAPPY ISLAND and the home away from home! Tourism in Aruba is performing well. However, in Aruba, about six of ten youngsters between the ages of 12 and 18 are alone or without adult supervision after school time. In most cases because their parents are working. In addition, many of Aruba's youngsters do not travel often and experience boredom and lack of activities during school vacations. Furthermore, four out of ten Aruban youngsters do not finish secondary school. This is a very big issue for Aruba's future economy and the tourism industry.

During a recent investigation, more than 60% of Aruba's youth is asking for afterschool programs, aiming at sports, cooking, art programs and a safe place to hang out with friends. More than 50 non-profit organizations are motivated to contribute to a national program. Your donation will help us to start and support after school programs with a focus on time for homework and diverse, meaningful activities. In addition, your donation will support mentorship activities during school vacation and support projects aiming at youth at risk. Last but not least, your donation will support projects that reduce the amounts of school drop-outs and create new opportunities



for youngsters to integrate back in education and to find a career in one of Aruba's countless companies.

Get engaged, inspired and connected with our local community. Let's build a bridge between community organizations and the tourism industry. Let's keep Aruba's youth happy! □



Happy Community Initiative Aruba

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Send us Your Home Greetings Video

ORANJESTAD — Aruba Today has a column called Aruba To Me where readers are invited to send their favorite vacation picture along with a text starting with "Aruba to me is ...". The column grew in popularity and the editorial department loves seeing this interaction with our readers.

It is wonderful to share the moments of joy of our readers who are vacationing here, but we can also imagine that there are people who stayed behind and who are being missed. Aruba Today would like to give the opportunity to you as an appreciated reader to send a live greeting to your beloved ones back home. It can be your parent, child, sister, brother, neighbor who takes care of the cat, friends ... name it. Now is your chance, send us your Home Greetings Video!

What Do You Do

The only thing you need to do is record a short (maximum 1 minute) video with a greeting to home from Aruba and send it to email news@arubatoday.com. Also please write your name and where you are from as well as how long you will be staying in Aruba. We will post your video on the Facebook page and website of Aruba Today! In case you prefer to send a text and picture to have a printed vacation memory instead of a video, be our guest.



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Last but not least: check out our website and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. □

“Take your car off the beaten track to meet our monuments and their stories”

ORANJESTAD - The mix of cultures in Aruba is very visible in its architecture as -like in all cultures-, monuments reflect your history and your people. If you take the chance to leave the beach for a little while and take your car off the beaten track you will be surprised what you see. Anne Witsenburg is director of the Monument Fund Aruba and points out precisely why a monumental trip should not lack in your vacation's itinerary.

The fund owns 12 monuments, out of the 36 protected monuments in the island. “But there are over 300 more monuments on the list to be protected and of course we dream to see that become reality as soon as possible.” The international guidelines that apply for monuments decide whether it will be a protected monument or not. “The building or object needs to be at least 50 years old, a special value in architecture or to history or to the people of Aruba is required and there has to be a certain uniqueness. If it was changed too much throughout time or there are already any of the same kind it is a no go.”

Useless islands

There is a difference between the islands when it comes to monuments, as Witsenburg explains.



“That goes back to their history. Curacao used to be a very wealthy island where many -mainly Dutch- merchants lived close together and that is the reason you find this typical colonial Dutch style buildings packed in certain areas nowadays. They are celebrating more than 20 years of Unesco heritage. Than scattered around the rest of the island you will see the smaller country houses.” Aruba and Bonaire were called the useless islands in the colonial time, so any Indian willing to live here was given a small piece of land to build his home. “That is the reason you find all these typical small houses scattered around the island. We actually have the same amount of monuments as Curacao though way smaller.”

Magic local touch

Some of the monuments owned by the Monument Fund Aruba are the light house, town hall, water tanks in both Oranjestad and San Nico-

las. “We are wealthy in different styled monuments and my suggestion is to discover this world outside of the tourist zone. The book Monumental Guide comes in handy as there are three maps inside that guide you to the monuments and tell you about them. But there are also possibilities to have your personal people guide. And the best is that I can almost guarantee you the magic of the local touch when you bump into an authentic cunucu house (country house) and talk to the owners. They will proudly share their family history with you.”

Outside inspiration

The Monument Fund acquires or buys monuments and restores them back into their former glory. Than they rent it out. “That sounds easy, but it is incredibly complex as most monuments have multiple owners due to the fact that inheritances are split and all need to decide upon the selling.” They cooperate with the government office of monuments because they set the rules of what you can and cannot do to a protected monument. “We also have the task to maintain the buildings which is an ongoing process. The wind, the salt in the air and the sun that not only burns human bodies but also buildings are huge challenges. Next to that we do education, create awareness and maintain public relations about our monuments.”



Sustainable driven

Sustainability is a big thing to the Monument Fund Aruba. Witsenburg: “Obviously to restore old buildings and not destroy them to build new ones is already sustainable in itself. Than we have the technical sustainability as in using the right materials and techniques but also the social sustainability. That includes looking at the non-tangible part of heritage: the stories to be told, the music to be played, the dinners that were cooked in the places we try to restore. That keeps it alive. Most of our monuments are meant to be lived in so we would like to reintroduce the joy of living in a monument. We work together with private companies to look into that.” In their office they installed solar panels, use LED lightning and recently implemented an electrical charging point for electric vehicles.

The Monument Fund Aruba is open every day from Monday to Friday from 8 to 5. You are more than welcome to ask for information, guiding and help. For more information check out their Facebook page stichting monumenten fonds aruba and the website <http://www.monumentenfondsaruba.com>. □

Can I have a ..., please?

ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change?? How about a different breakfast from what you are used to at your hotel. Hop in your car, drive around and anywhere around the island you will come across a local snack shop.

Here you will find all types of snacks loved by the locals. Try a pastechi, a Caribbean pastry filled with



cheese or meat and fried up deliciously. Or perhaps you might want to try a croquette, a crusty little meat ball. A dedito is also a good option, it's a stick made out

of cheese or hotdog. If you want to try something more familiar go for a homemade hamburger or a ham and cheese toast, but with a local touch. All these snacks are ridiculously addictive. Freshen up with a delicious fruit shake (bafido) made out of watermelon, strawberry, banana, papaya or just mix any fruit together. What makes these little snack shops more attractive is the warmth of



its people and the smile you get for free. □

SPORTS



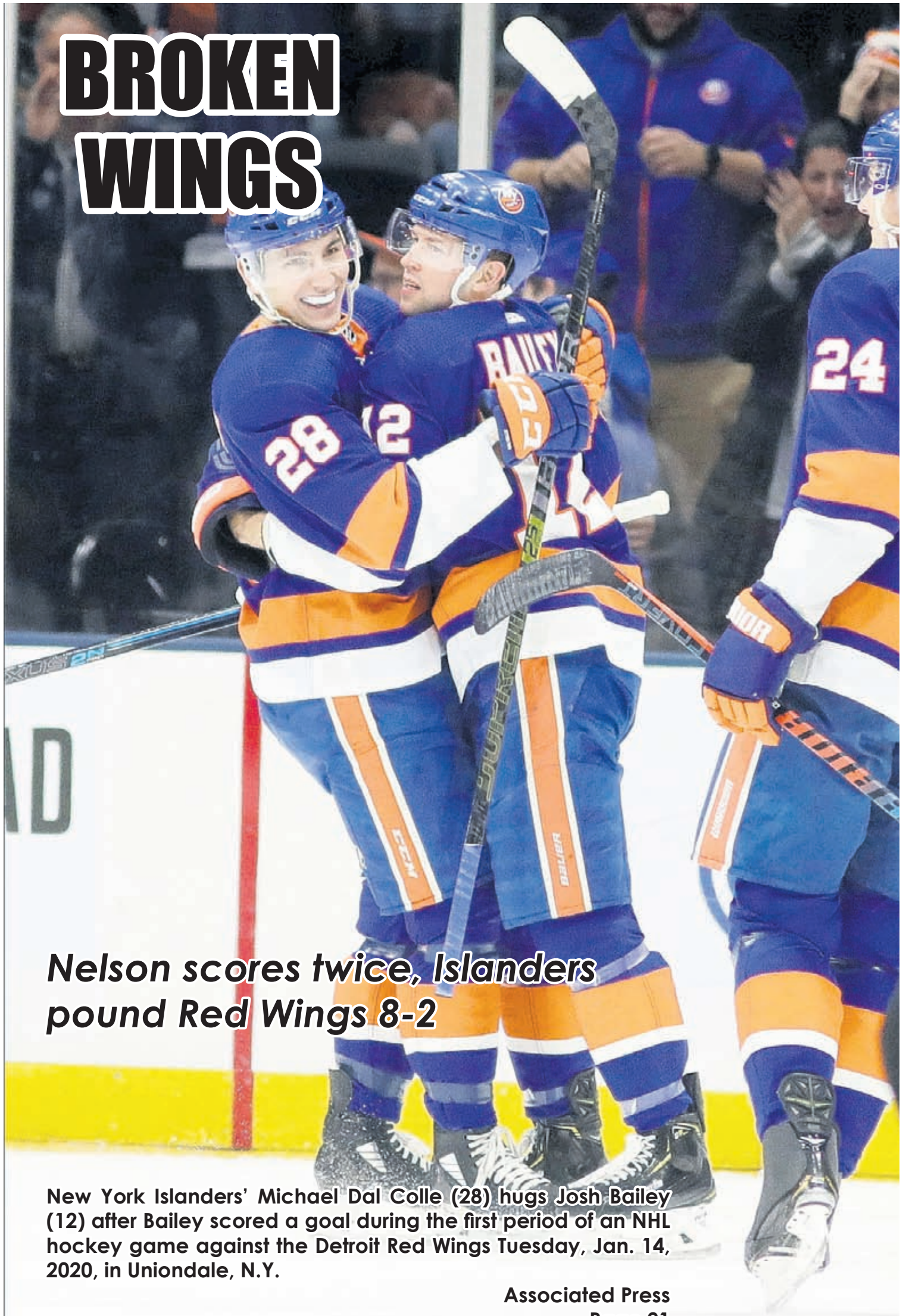
In this Nov. 2, 2019, file photo, Abel Cedillo rides Mongolian Groom in the Breeders' Cup Classic horse race at Santa Anita Park in Arcadia, Calif.
Associated Press

Report: Vets missed chances involving Breeders' Cup fatality

By BETH HARRIS
AP Racing Writer
LOS ANGELES (AP) — A report on the death of Mongolian Groom in the Breeders' Cup Classic at Santa Anita says veterinarians missed opportunities to remove the gelding from the \$6 million race because of time constraints or deficiencies in the process used to evaluate horses. In the 20-page report issued Wednesday, Dr. Larry Bramlage identified six suggested improvements aimed at refining safety and evaluation protocols for future events. Mongolian Groom, a 4-year-old gelding, suffered what Cup officials described as "a serious fracture" of his left hind leg in the late stages of the Classic last November, which was shown on national television.

Continued on Page 23

BROKEN WINGS



Nelson scores twice, Islanders pound Red Wings 8-2

New York Islanders' Michael Dal Colle (28) hugs Josh Bailey (12) after Bailey scored a goal during the first period of an NHL hockey game against the Detroit Red Wings Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020, in Uniondale, N.Y.

Associated Press
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European, PGA Tour take steps to single out slow players

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
AP Golf Writer

The European Tour and PGA Tour are trying to crack down on slow play with revamped policies that allow for swifter penalty shots and for officials to target players who are taking too long to play.

The policies, while slightly different, are similar in that the objective is to encourage players to change their habits.

The European Tour policy starts this week at the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship. The PGA Tour is introducing its policy, which was approved in November, this week at The American Express. It does not begin until the week after the Masters. Previously, the PGA Tour did not time a player unless his group was out of position or lagging behind a scheduled time for them to play, known as time par. That stays in effect.

Additionally, any player taking 120 seconds for a shot, without a valid reason, will be given an "excessive shot time."

The tour also will have a weekly "observation list" to identify the slow players. They can be timed even if their group is in position on the golf course.

Players are put on the list if

ShotLink data shows they take an average of 45 seconds or more to play a shot based on their previous 10 tournaments. A player who receives two excessive shot times in one tournament also will be placed on the list, which is updated weekly. If an official sees a player on the list take 60 seconds or longer to play, he will be notified he is being timed. The timing only stops if the player goes two holes without a bad time.

The amount of time allowed to play hasn't changed — players have 40 seconds to hit a shot when it's their turn, with an additional 10 seconds for the player who is first to hit a various shot.

The penalties, however are swift.

Previously, if a group was out of position, a player received a warning if he had a bad time, and the second bad time in the same round resulted in a one-shot penalty. The last such penalty on the PGA Tour was assessed to Miguel Angel Carballo and Brian Campbell, partners in the 2013 Zurich Classic team event. Before that it was Glen Day in 1985.

Starting in April, players who are out of position or on the observation list will get a warning for the first



A course worker clears standing water off the 18th green before Bo Hoag putts during the final round of the Sony Open PGA Tour golf event, Sunday, Jan. 12, 2020, at Waialae Country Club in Honolulu.

bad time, and a one-shot penalty if it happens again during the tournament.

The fines also are steep. Players who receive a second bad time will be fined \$50,000, and \$20,000 for each additional bad time. For those caught having excessive shot times, they get a \$20,000 fine for the second violation, and \$20,000 for each one after that the rest of the season. On the European Tour, players also will get a one-shot penalty after a second bad time in a tournament, instead of a round.

A player can call a "time extension" for any stroke once a round, adding 40 seconds to the time allowed. Players must call for

this extension before they go over the allotted time.

Even when a group is in position, those players previously were allowed 100 seconds if they were first to hit, and 80 seconds for the rest of the group. That time was reduced 15% under the new policy, allowing players 85 seconds and 70 seconds, respectively. If a player exceeds the limit while the group is in position, he would get a "monitoring penalty." That typically involves a fine instead of a penalty because the group is not holding up anyone.

"Changing the regulation for an immediate one-shot penalty to now be triggered by two bad times

in a tournament instead of a round will force slower players to consistently ensure they play within timing regulations," said John Par-amor, the chief referee for the European Tour.

Europe introduced a four-point plan in August that also involves field size. The field at fully sanctioned events will be reduced from 156 to 144 players, provided that everyone who finished among the top 132 in the Race to Dubai are eligible for the tournament.

PGA Tour officials had long believed that too many players in the field effectively clogs up the golf course, similar to a traffic jam on a highway, and causes too much waiting. □

Associated Press

LSU probing Beckham's apparent on-field payments to players

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — LSU has contacted officials from the NCAA and Southeastern Conference about Cleveland Browns receiver Odell Beckham Jr.'s apparent cash payments to Tigers players on the field after the national championship game, a university spokesman said. LSU athletics spokesman Michael Bonnette said initial information suggested that Beckham handed out "novelty bills" to players after the top-ranked Tigers defeated Clemson on Monday night. However, further investigation showed that Beckham may have given away real money, Bonnette said. "Information and footage reviewed since shows apparent

cash may have also been given to LSU student-athletes," Bonnette said in a statement. "We were in contact with the NCAA and the SEC immediately upon learning of this situation in which some of our student-athletes may have been placed in a compromising position. We are working with our student-athletes, the NCAA and the SEC in order to rectify the situation." Beckham starred for LSU from 2011 to 2013 and was a first-round draft pick by the New York Giants. He was traded to Cleveland before last season. Videos posted on social media showed Beckham placing money in the hand of LSU receiver Justin Jefferson and celebrating

with players in LSU's locker room in the Superdome.

Jefferson, who just completed his junior season, is eligible to turn pro and enter this spring's NFL draft.

LSU graduate transfer quarterback Joe Burrow, who has exhausted his college eligibility and is expected to be a top NFL draft choice this year, said on a Barstool Sports podcast that it appeared to him Beckham was handing out actual cash.

The NCAA does not allow players to receive cash benefits while playing college football. Those rules are designed to prevent institutions from luring talent through the promise of direct or indirect payments. □



In this Dec. 28, 2019, file photo, LSU wide receiver Justin Jefferson (2) makes a touchdown catch against Oklahoma during the first half of the Peach Bowl NCAA semifinal college football playoff game, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

Cora remorseful, Red Sox begin search for new manager

By **JIMMY GOLEN**
AP Sports Writer
BOSTON (AP) —

The Boston Red Sox need to find a new manager, and it sounds like they haven't gotten over their old one. Heaping praise on Alex Cora a day after showing him the door, Red Sox owner John Henry said on Wednesday the team was going to miss "just about everything" about the man who led Boston to the 2018 World Series title only to be torpedoed in a cheating scandal.

"It was a sad day because we all have such respect for Alex," said chairman Tom Werner, who was one of several Red Sox officials keeping in touch with the deposed manager since his departure. "He admitted that what he did was wrong, but that doesn't mitigate, in our opinion, the extraordinary talent that he has. And we continue to be very fond of Alex."

A player on Boston's 2007 World Series-winning team who led the club to another title in his first year as a rookie manager, Cora was ousted on Tuesday, a day after baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred identified him as the ringleader in a sign-stealing scheme when he was the bench coach for the 2017 Astros.

Major League Baseball is also looking into whether Cora installed a similar system in Boston after arriving the following year. No conclusions have been reached, and there is no timetable; the Astros investigation took two months. "We would ask that everyone to reserve judgment until MLB completes its investigation and determines whether rules were violated," Henry said. "I can tell you that we are working with baseball to the fullest extent possible."

The Red Sox insisted that Cora's departure was a mutual decision because he could not continue to lead the team effectively. Team president Sam Kennedy said he anticipated a day that Cora would

return to baseball. "While it was difficult personally for a lot of people, (and) professionally, it was ultimately an easy decision for the Red Sox and for Alex," Kennedy said. "Alex is an incredibly talented manager and accomplished great things with us. He expressed remorse. He apologized yesterday to us for the embarrassment that this caused." The decision leaves the Red Sox, who went 84-78 and missed the playoffs last year for the first time since 2015, without a manager and less than a month to find one before spring training. Chief baseball officer Chaim Bloom, who was hired in October, said he hadn't had time yet to for-

mulate a short list. "The short answer is we don't know yet," Bloom said when asked about the current coaching staff. "Obviously, this just happened." Complicating the search for a replacement is that the Red Sox don't know if anyone else will face sanctions from the commissioner. And with just a month before spring training other teams may be reluctant to grant permission to interview members of their staffs. The Astros are also looking for a manager, and New York Mets manager Carlos Beltrán was also implicated in the cheating from his time in Houston.

"There's no question it's an unusual time to be doing a



In this Sept. 9, 2019, file photo, Boston Red Sox manager Alex Cora talks about the dismissal of president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski, during a news conference before the team's baseball game against the New York Yankees in Boston.

Associated Press

managerial search," Bloom said, "Being this close to spring training, it's impossible for that not to be a factor in how we proceed. But it's not going to be the only factor. And we want to make sure we do this justice." Bloom said there will be internal candidates,

along with ones from outside the organization. Among those who have been mentioned are Jason Varitek, the former catcher who is now a special assistant, and bench coach Ron Roenicke, who managed the Milwaukee Brewers from 2011-15. □

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Captain Herby would catch the fish to be served at the restaurant the same day. That concept still lives, what is 'hooked' during the day is cooked in the evening at the restaurant.

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Bertram "Driftwood" or on their more spacious 37ft twin engine Bertram called "Living Easy". Both yachts are available for charters from 8am to 12 noon, or from 1 to 5pm (6-hour trips also available). To book a fishing charter visit www.driftwoodfishingcharters.com or call Herbert direct at (297)-5924040.



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Cardinals star WR Fitzgerald returning for 2020 season



In this Oct. 6, 2019, file photo, Arizona Cardinals wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald attends a news conference after winning an NFL football game against the Cincinnati Bengals, in Cincinnati.

Associated Press

By **DAVID BRANDT**
AP Sports Writer

TEMPE, Arizona (AP) — Larry Fitzgerald didn't keep the Arizona Cardinals waiting for long. One of the most productive wide receivers in NFL history isn't done yet,

returning for his 17th season with the franchise that drafted him in 2004.

After some speculation that the popular 36-year-old Fitzgerald might finally retire, the team announced Wednesday he has signed

a one-year contract that will keep him in the desert through 2020.

"This season was among the most fun of my career," Fitzgerald said in a tweet. "The future is so bright for this team & I relish the opportunity to build with this talented young nucleus."

"Arizona is where I started and where I will finish. 2020! Let's get to work!"

Fitzgerald was a key part of the Cardinals' offense in his 16th NFL season, leading the team with 75 catches for 804 yards and four touchdowns. He repeatedly said how much he enjoyed playing with rookie quarterback Kyler Murray, who was the No. 1 overall pick in last year's draft and quickly developed into a quality starter. He also was quick to praise first-year coach Kliff Kingsbury.

Now they'll get a second shot to make the playoffs together. The Cardinals had a 5-10-1 record last year, which was last

in the NFC West. But the franchise showed growth as the season progressed, including a road win over playoff-bound Seattle on Dec. 22. Fitzgerald's future was a little uncertain after the Cardinals lost to the Rams on Dec. 29 in the regular-season finale. Though his on-field performance showed he was still a high-quality NFL receiver, he often talks about how he's got other interests and would take a few weeks to make his decision.

Kingsbury said he'd make his pitch for Fitzgerald to return. Teammates wanted him back, too, though nobody seemed totally certain what his final decision would be.

Now the speculation is over. He'll be 37 before the start of next season, but there's little sign he's slowing down.

In 16 seasons with Arizona, Fitzgerald is the Cardinals' franchise leader in games played (250), receptions

(1,378), receiving yards (17,083), receiving touchdowns (120), total touchdowns (120) and 100-yard games (49). His 1,378 career receptions are the most by any player in NFL history with a single team. He ranks second all time behind Hall of Famer Jerry Rice (1,549). Fitzgerald's 17,083 career receiving yards also rank second in NFL history, while his 120 career touchdown receptions are sixth.

In the 2019 season finale against the Rams, Fitzgerald appeared in his 250th career game for the Cardinals, becoming the first wideout and 13th player in NFL history to appear in at least 250 games with a single team.

An 11-time Pro Bowler, Fitzgerald has played all 16 games in each of the last five years (2015-19) and his streak of 84 consecutive starts is the longest active streak among NFL wide receivers. □

Crosby posts goal, 3 assists in return, Pens rout Wild 7-3

By The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Sidney Crosby had a goal and three assists in his first game back from abdominal surgery and the Pittsburgh Penguins rolled past Minnesota 7-3 on Tuesday night. Crosby needed less than eight minutes to pick up his first point since before Halloween, assisting on Evgeni Malkin's first goal of the night 7:57 in. Crosby added his sixth goal of the season in the third period when he slipped a backhand past Devan Dubnyk as the Penguins rolled to their fourth straight victory.

Malkin finished with two goals and a pretty no-look drop pass to set up Bryan Rust's 19th of the season. Jared McCann scored for the fourth time in five games for Pittsburgh, Dominik Simon added his fifth, and Tristan Jarry stopped 25 shots to improve to 11-0-1 in his last 12 starts against Western Conference opponents.

Crosby skated 17:53 after missing 28 games following abdominal surgery and looked just as dangerous as ever as the Penguins pulled within four points of first-place Washington in the Metropolitan Division.

Zach Parise scored twice and Marcus Foligno added his ninth for the Wild, who spotted the Penguins a four-goal lead. Dubnyk finished with 22 saves, and the Wild fell to 1-5-1 in their last seven games.

BLUE JACKETS 3, BRUINS 0

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Elvis Merzlikins recorded his second consecutive shutout and Columbus beat Atlantic Division-leading Boston for its fourth win in five games.

Alexander Wennberg, Kevin Stenlund and Riley Nash scored for Columbus.

Merzlikins won for the sixth time in his last eight starts and turned aside all 34 shots he faced. His five wins since Dec. 31 tie him for the NHL lead with Tampa Bay's Andrei Vasilevskiy.

Boston goaltender Jaroslav Halak entered the game at 1:12 of the first period after Tukka Rask was inadvertently struck in the head



In this Nov. 2, 2019, file photo, Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby prepares to take a face-off during the second period of an NHL hockey game against the Edmonton Oilers in Pittsburgh.

Associated Press

by an elbow in the crease. Halak stopped 24 shots in relief as the Bruins lost their second straight and were shut out for the first time this season.

SABRES 4, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Jack Eichel scored the go-ahead goal on an end-to-end rush 7:57 into the third period in Buffalo's win over slumping Vegas.

The goal was Eichel's career-high-matching 28th of the season and came in a game in which he added an assist to become Buffalo's first player in 27 years to reach the 60-point mark in 46 or fewer games. Sam Reinhart had a goal and two assists, and Kyle Okposo and Curtis Lazar, with an empty-netter, also scored. Linus Ullmark stopped 23 shots, and the Sabres improved to 4-2 in their past six.

Reilly Smith and Tomas Nosek scored for the Golden Knights, who have lost four straight to match their longest streak without a point in their three-year franchise history.

Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 22 shots.

ISLANDERS 8, RED WINGS 2

UNIONDALE, N.Y. (AP) — Brock Nelson scored twice and the Islanders routed Detroit.

New York scored three times in the first eight min-

utes. The league-worst Red Wings were out of it early, and Thomas Greiss made 34 saves to back the Islanders.

Jordan Eberle, Josh Bailey and Nelson chased Detroit goalie Jimmy Howard with their three early goals. Calvin Pickard relieved and stopped 14 of 19 shots.

Anders Lee, Anthony Beauvillier, Noah Dobson and Leo Komarov also scored for the Islanders.

Filip Hronek and Givani Smith scored for Detroit.

LIGHTNING 4, KINGS 3, SO

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Nikita Kucherov scored late to force overtime and Steven Stamkos delivered the game-deciding goal in a shootout as Tampa Bay rallied to beat Los Angeles.

Brayden Point also beat Kings goalie Jonathan Quick in the shootout, helping the Lightning rebound from a 2-1 loss to New Jersey that stopped Tampa Bay's franchise record-tying 10-game winning streak on Sunday.

Stamkos and Alex Killorn also scored in regulation for the Lightning, who overcame deficits of 2-0 and 3-2. Kucherov's 18th goal of the season made it 3-3 with 1:15 remaining in the third period. Quick stopped 35 of 38 shots for Los Angeles, which took a 3-2 lead when Dustin Brown scored on the power play at 12:00 of the

third.

Tampa Bay's Andrei Vasilevskiy, who blanked the Arizona Coyotes and Philadelphia Flyers in his previous two starts, finished with 38 saves.

MAPLE LEAFS 7, DEVILS 4

TORONTO (AP) — Auston Matthews had his first hat trick since scoring four times in his NHL debut and Toronto beat New Jersey. John Tavares scored as part of a three-point night for the Leafs and Rasmus Sandin had two assists in his first game since getting called up from the minors to help reinforce the injury-riddled defense corps. William Nylander and Zach Hyman each had a goal and an assist, and Frederik Gauthier had the other goal for Toronto (25-16-6), which entered winless in its previous three games. Mitch Marner chipped in with two assists.

Frederik Andersen made 24 saves for the Leafs.

Blake Coleman, with his first-career hat trick, and P.K. Subban scored for New Jersey. Will Butcher had three assists. Louis Domingue allowed five goals on 19 shots before getting yanked midway through the second period. Veteran backup Cory Schneider finished with 13 saves.

BLACKHAWKS 3, SENATORS 2, OT

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — Jonathan Toews scored 42 seconds into overtime and assisted on Chicago's two other goals in a win over Ottawa. Dominik Kubalik added a pair of goals for the Blackhawks. Robin Lehner stopped 20 shots. Connor Brown and Chris Tierney scored first-period goals for the Senators. Rookie goaltender Marcus Hogberg started in net for the third straight game and made 27 saves.

JETS 4, CANUCKS 0

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — Kyle Connor scored twice, Connor Hellebuyck made 41 saves in his fourth shutout of the season, and Winnipeg snapped a six-game home losing streak with a win over Vancouver. It was the 18th shutout of Hellebuyck's career and gave him the franchise record for shutouts, surpassing Ondrej Pavelec.

Jack Roslovic and Blake Wheeler also had a goal each and Patrik Laine picked up a pair of assists for the Jets, who have won their past 10 games against Vancouver. Jacob Markstrom stopped 21 of the 24 shots he faced for the Canucks, who have been shut out three times this season.

STARS 3, AVALANCHE 2

DENVER (AP) — Esa Lindell scored 1:54 into overtime after Jason Dickinson tied the game late in regulation and Dallas put the finishing touches on a season series sweep of Colorado.

Lindell found himself all alone in the middle of the ice and sent a wrist shot past Philipp Grubauer as the Stars rallied from an early two-goal deficit.

Dickinson tied the game for the Stars with 5:23 remaining on a backhand shot. Denis Gurianov also scored in the fourth and final meeting between the Central Division adversaries. The Stars captured the season series 4-0. Ben Bishop stopped 41 shots in a game in which the Avalanche hit at least three posts.

Gabriel Landeskog and Nikita Zadorov had goals for the Avalanche, with Nathan MacKinnon assisting on both. □

Morant leads Grizzlies past Rockets 121-110 for 6th straight

By The Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Rookie guard Ja Morant had 26 points and eight assists, Dillon Brooks scored 24 and the Memphis Grizzlies won their sixth straight game by defeating the Houston Rockets 121-110 on Tuesday night.

Jonas Valanciunas added 19 points and Jaren Jackson Jr. had 15 despite going 6 of 16 from the floor. Morant missed only one of his 11 shots as the Grizzlies extended their longest winning streak since December 2016.

James Harden led the Rockets with 41 points as backcourt mate Russell Westbrook took the night off in the first game of a back-to-back. Eric Gordon finished with 23 points, and Clint Capela had 16 points and 16 rebounds.

Harden has scored at least 40 points in five straight games against the Grizzlies. The teams were tied at 95 with about eight minutes left when the Grizzlies went on an 11-1 run fueled by 3-pointers from Solomon Hill, Brooks and Morant.

CLIPPERS 128, CAVALIERS 103

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kawhi Leonard scored a season-high 43 points in three quarters as Los Angeles routed Cleveland.

According to Sportradar, it was only the second time since 1996 a Clippers player scored at least 40 points in the first three quarters. Lou Williams had 40 against



Memphis Grizzlies guard Ja Morant (12) is defended by Houston Rockets guard Ben McLemore (16) in the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020, in Memphis, Tenn.

Associated Press

Golden State in a 2018 game.

Leonard played 29 minutes and was 14 of 22 from the floor, including 6 of 10 on 3-pointers. He was two points from tying his regular-season career high.

Williams added 24 points for the Clippers, who played again without injured star Paul George. They have won five of six and had six scorers in double figures.

Collin Sexton led the Cavaliers with 25 points and Cedi Osman added 21. Rookie guard Darius Garland, the fifth overall pick in last June's draft, had 14 points and a career-high 10 assists for his first double-double.

JAZZ 118, NETS 107

NEW YORK (AP) — Joe In-

gles matched his career high with 27 points, Rudy Gobert had 22 points and 18 rebounds, and Utah ran its winning streak to 10 games by beating Brooklyn. Donovan Mitchell returned from a one-game absence with an illness to score 25 points — 14 in the fourth quarter — and Bojan Bogdanovic had 18 for the Jazz, who opened a 20-point lead and turned back every attempt by the Nets to make it close. Utah has won 15 of 16.

BUCKS 128, KNICKS 102

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Giannis Antetokounmpo needed only 21 minutes on the court to score 37 points and lead Milwaukee past New York. Antetokounmpo did not

play in the fourth quarter after the Bucks built a 32-point lead entering the final period on the way to sweeping the three-game season series with the Knicks.

Khris Middleton added 17 points and Ersan Ilyasova had 14 points and seven rebounds for Milwaukee, which led by as many as 35 and improved its record to an NBA-best 36-6.

Julius Randle had 25 points and 15 rebounds to pace the Knicks (11-30), and rookie R.J. Barrett added 22 points. Bobby Portis had 20 off the bench.

MAVERICKS 124, WARRIORS 97

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Dwight Powell scored 21

points and was 9 for 9 from the field in Dallas' victory over Golden State. Luka Doncic added 20 points and eight rebounds as the Mavericks won their fourth straight against the Warriors — three in a row on their home floor. Jordan Poole came off the bench to score 17 points for Golden State. Fellow reserve Eric Paschall added 16, but the Warriors lost their eighth consecutive game and fourth straight at Chase Center. Injury-plagued Golden State lost another player when guard Jacob Evans III was taken to a hospital to be evaluated for a head injury. He was helped off the court with 4:38 left in the first half after getting hit with an elbow by Powell as they fought for a rebound. Mavericks star Kristaps Porzingis sat out an eighth straight game. He has been feeling ill and is still dealing with soreness in his right knee.

HAWKS 123, SUNS 110

ATLANTA (AP) — Trae Young scored 21 of his 36 points in the fourth quarter and Atlanta pulled away late to beat Phoenix.

It was Young's 20th game with at least 30 points this season. He got help from backcourt partner Kevin Huerter, who scored 23 points and set career highs with 15 rebounds and eight assists. John Collins added 22 points and 10 rebounds for the Hawks, who snapped a four-game losing streak. □



A Congressional Gold Medal is presented to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) advocate and former National Football League (NFL) player, Steve Gleason, in Statuary Hall on Capitol Hill, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020, in Washington. Holding the medal is his wife Michel Gleason.

Associated Press

Ex-NFL player Steve Gleason honored by Congress for ALS work

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former NFL player Steve Gleason has received the Congressional Gold Medal — the highest civilian honor bestowed by Congress — for his work as an advocate for people with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. "This award represents the people of the United States of America and is a sublime honor for me," Gleason, who no longer can speak on his own, said through a computer-

generated voice. "It represents some joy, some encouragement and some triumphs for the tens of thousands of families living with ALS and others living with disabilities or experiencing anguish, tragedy or adversity." Gleason thanked his family for their support since his diagnosis, noting to his wife, Michel, "This is not the life we imagined and it hasn't been easy." Gleason also said it's his children — son Rivers and daughter Gray — who

"give me purpose." House Speaker Nancy Pelosi opened the ceremony. "We have come to honor a true American hero ... who has transformed the lives of so many people living with ALS," Pelosi said. "You bring pride to our nation." Saints quarterback Drew Brees and his son, Baylen; Saints owner Gayle Benson; NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell; and former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue were among those in attendance. □

Breeders' Cup

Continued from Page 17

Four vets recommended that he be euthanized. Bramlage noted it was "unlikely" that the track surface influenced Mongolian Groom's injury since it had recently been removed and re-done and there was no significant rain at the time. He said the question of whether Santa Anita's surface predisposes horses to an increased incidence of injury long term was beyond the scope of his report. Bramlage said Mongolian Groom had small stress fractures in both hind cannon bones before the Classic, but they hadn't caused any inflammation in the fetlock joint even though they were just millimeters away from the joint surface. He said once the gelding's left hind fracture occurred during the race, it resulted in a chain of events that created the fatal injury. He said the defect in Mongolian Groom's left hind cannon bone was roughly one-quarter inch in size and not easily spotted on X-rays. It would have taken a combination of confirming lameness and X-ray proof to diagnose.

"It is not an easy task at any time," Bramlage wrote, "but is especially difficult in the circumstances of a pre-race examination."

Bramlage also found there was "no reason to believe medication played any role in the horse's injury."

During Breeders' Cup week, Bramlage said Mongolian Groom was informally on a watch list for increased observation, but he said four other Classic runners were on the same list. In all, 24 Cup horses — including Mongolian Groom — were on the list for extra scrutiny. Of those, eight were disqualified from competition. Three different officials made multiple observations that Mongolian Groom was "stiff" or "choppy" from behind, but was symmetrical in both hind legs, similar to his previous two races. He was one of 17 horses that had such issues on the pre-race barn exams. Sixteen of those

horses competed without incident.

"It is hard to fault a process that had a 99.6% accuracy rate," Bramlage said, noting that of the 229 horses that competed in last year's world championships, Mongolian Groom was the only one to be injured.

But Kathy Guillermo, senior vice president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, said Mongolian Groom was "raced to his death" with two stress fractures.

"This should never have happened," said Guillermo. "If the racing industry had listened to PETA five years ago when we urged a trial study of CurveBeam's CT imaging equipment, Mongolian Groom would likely be alive today."

Guillermo also said PETA isn't convinced that medications played no role in Mongolian Groom's death. Bramlage's six recommendations were:

- Pre-identify horses before arrival at the event with histories of concerns to be looked at

- Focus responsibility for individual horse exams. Seven regulatory vets looked at Mongolian Groom a total of 10 times and Bramlage concluded that had there been fewer people, a more focused assessment may have resulted

- Improve the quality of on-track observations leading up to the event

- Create space in the barn area where regulatory vets could observe horses on the extra security list jog in a circle

- Make diagnostic imaging part of the pre-race exams for selected horses

- Take advantage of all available video footage of horses before the event

After the event, the Breeders' Cup board of directors hired Bramlage, of Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital in Kentucky, to conduct an evaluation of Mongolian Groom's pre-race condition and injury, as well as all pre-race safety and evaluation protocols in place for the two-day world championships. □



Driver Carlos Sainz, of Spain, and co-driver Lucas Cruz, of Spain, race their Mini during stage nine of the Dakar Rally between Wadi Al Dawasir and Haradh, Saudi Arabia, Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2020.

Associated Press

Sainz pads Dakar Rally leader after rivals make wrong turns

SHUBAYTAH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Dakar Rally leader Carlos Sainz took advantage of navigation mistakes by title rivals Nasser Al-Attiyah and Stephane Peterhansel to give himself breathing space on Wednesday.

Sainz started the 10th of 12 stages leading Al-Attiyah by only seconds, but by the end of the day he was back in charge by 18 minutes against Al-Attiyah and Mini teammate Peterhansel.

The stage from Haradh down to Shubaytah was supposed to be the rally's longest at 534 kilometers, but race organizers cut it short by just under 200 kilometers after strong winds picked up and medical resources were stretched. Crashes by driver Roman Starikov (back) and biker Javier Gomez (broken femur) required both to be helicoptered to hospital.

When the rally was stopped, Peterhansel and Al-Attiyah had become lost and were just getting back on the right course.

"The navigation has been really tricky for the whole rally," Sainz said. "It was a tricky stage with a lot of cut-up dunes, but not big dunes — small dunes. We had a heavy landing in one of them. We damaged the car a little bit, but everything is so far, so good."

"I didn't really think the gap would be so big, but tomorrow is another day and the opposite could happen. If I get lost like what happened to the others today, or for me yesterday, you never know how it will finish."

Al-Attiyah didn't hide his disappointment but remained upbeat.

"It's still a long day tomorrow," he said. "Carlos will be opening and I'll be starting in 17th position. It's very difficult to put the pressure on but we need to do a good stage first of all. Nothing is over yet. There is still a long way tomorrow with 80 kilometers of sand dunes. Things will be difficult for everybody."

Peterhansel opened the way and took a wrong turn just 20 kilometers in. By the time he was back on track, Sainz had caught up to him.

Former Formula One champion Fernando Alonso rolled his car and broke his windscreen. Losing more than an hour dropped him from 10th overall to 14th.

Joan Barreda won the motorbikes stage only a minute ahead of Ricky Brabec. Kevin Benavides was third, giving Honda 1-2-3 on the podium.

By finishing second, Brabec increased his overall lead to 26 minutes over Pablo Quintanilla, 27 minutes over Barreda, and 28 minutes over defending champion Toby Price.

"We have two days left, two more sleeps, so I'm not going to get any hopes up yet, but we're going to do our best to finish the next two days," Brabec said. "We're not going to let the pressure affect us and let people get into our heads. I wouldn't say I'm having good luck, I'm just trying to stay smart and be focused."

The race finishes on Friday. □

NSA finds major security flaw in Windows 10, free fix issued

By **MATT O'BRIEN**

AP Technology Writer

The National Security Agency has discovered a major security flaw in Microsoft's Windows 10 operating system that could let hackers intercept seemingly secure communications.

But rather than exploit the flaw for its own intelligence needs, the NSA tipped off Microsoft so that it can fix the system for everyone.

Microsoft released a free software patch to fix the flaw Tuesday and credited the intelligence agency for discovering it. The company said it has not seen any evidence that hackers have used the technique.

Amit Yoran, CEO of security firm Tenable, said it is "exceptionally rare if not unprecedented" for the U.S. government to share its discovery of such a critical vulnerability with a company. Yoran, who was a



This Aug. 7, 2017, file shows a Microsoft Windows sign on display at a store in Hialeah, Fla.

Associated Press

founding director of the Department of Homeland Security's computer emergency readiness team, urged all organizations to prioritize patching their systems quickly.

An advisory sent by the NSA

on Tuesday said "the consequences of not patching the vulnerability are severe and widespread."

Microsoft said an attacker could exploit the vulnerability by spoofing a code-signing certificate so it

looked like a file came from a trusted source.

"The user would have no way of knowing the file was malicious, because the digital signature would appear to be from a trusted provider," the company

said. If successfully exploited, attackers would have been able to conduct "man-in-the-middle attacks" and decrypt confidential information they intercept on user connections, the company said.

Some computers will get the fix automatically, if they have the automatic update option turned on. Others can get it manually by going to Windows Update in the computer's settings.

Microsoft typically releases security and other updates once a month and waited until Tuesday to disclose the flaw and the NSA's involvement. Microsoft and the NSA both declined to say when the agency privately notified the company. The agency shared the vulnerability with Microsoft "quickly and responsibly," Neal Ziring, technical director of the NSA's cybersecurity directorate, said in a blog post Tuesday.

Priscilla Moriuchi, who retired from the NSA in 2017 after running its East Asia and Pacific operations, said this is a good example of the "constructive role" that the NSA can play in improving global information security. Moriuchi, now an analyst at the U.S. cybersecurity firm Recorded Future, said it's likely a reflection of changes made in 2017 to how the U.S. determines whether to disclose a major vulnerability or exploit it for intelligence purposes.

The revamping of what's known as the "Vulnerability Equities Process" put more emphasis on disclosing vulnerabilities whenever possible to protect core internet systems and the U.S. economy and general public.

Those changes happened after a mysterious group calling itself the "Shadow Brokers" released a trove of high-level hacking tools stolen from the NSA, forcing companies including Microsoft to repair their systems. The U.S. believes that North Korea and Russia were able to capitalize on those stolen hacking tools to unleash devastating global cyberattacks. □

Dating apps leak personal data, Norwegian group says

LONDON (AP) — Dating apps including Grindr, OkCupid and Tinder leak personal information to advertising tech companies in possible violation of European data privacy laws, a Norwegian consumer group said in a report Tuesday.

The Norwegian Consumer Council said it found "serious privacy infringements" in its analysis of how shadowy online ad companies track and profile smartphone users.

The council, a government-funded nonprofit group, commissioned cybersecurity company Mnemonic to study 10 Android mobile apps. It found that the apps sent user data to at least 135 different third party services involved in advertising or behavioral profiling.

"The situation is completely out of control," the council said, urging European regulators to enforce the continent's strict General Data Privacy Regulation, or GDPR. It said the majority of the apps did not present us-



In this Wednesday, May 29, 2019 file photo, a woman checks the Grindr app on her mobile phone in Beirut, Lebanon.

Associated Press

ers with legally-compliant consent mechanisms.

The council took action against some of the companies it examined, filing formal complaints with Norway's data protection authority against Grindr, Twitter-owned mobile app advertising platform MoPub and four ad tech companies.

Grindr sent data including users' GPS location, age and gender to the other companies, the council said.

Twitter said it disabled Grindr's MoPub account

and is investigating the issue "to understand the sufficiency of Grindr's consent mechanism."

Period tracker app MyDays and virtual makeup app Perfect 365 were also among the apps sharing personal data with ad services, the report said.

IAC, owner of Tinder and OkCupid, said the company shares information with third parties only when it is "deemed necessary to operate its platform" with third party apps.

The company said it considers the practice in line

with all European and U.S. regulations. The U.S. doesn't have federal regulation like the GDPR, although some states, notably California, have enacted their own laws. Nine civil rights groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union of California, the Electronic Privacy Information Center, Public Citizen and U.S. PIRG sent a letter to the Federal Trade Commission, Congress and state attorneys general of California, Texas and Oregon asking them to investigate the apps named in the report. "Congress should use the findings of the report as a road map for a new law that ensures that such flagrant violations of privacy found in the EU are not acceptable in the U.S.," the groups said in a statement.

The FTC confirmed it received the letter but declined to comment further. The creators of the MyDays, Perfect 365 and Grindr apps did not immediately respond to requests for comment. □

U.S. lobster industry hopes new deal renews trade with China

By **PATRICK WHITTLE**

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) —

Members of the American lobster industry are hopeful the thawing of trade relations between the U.S. and China will reopen one of the biggest markets in the world for the seafood.

China is one of the biggest export destinations for lobster, which are trapped in the cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean by American and Canadian fishermen and are worth hundreds of millions of dollars per year. But President Donald Trump's trade hostilities with China resulted in heavy tariffs on U.S. lobster exports, and Canada took firm control of the business over the last 18 months.

Trump and Chinese officials announced a new trade agreement Wednesday that could change all that. The proposal includes purchase agreements that formalize China's commitment to buy more American goods in some sectors, said Republican Sen. Susan Collins. Lobster is highlighted in the agricultural purchase agreement, the Maine senator added.

That clears a path for American lobster export-



In this Aug. 24, 2019, file photo, a dealer at Cape Porpoise holds a 3 1/2 pound lobster in Kennebunkport, Maine.

Associated Press

ers to take back access to China, a market that had been growing for years, said Annie Tselikis, executive director of Maine Lobster Dealers' Association.

"China presents incredible opportunity for the coastal Maine economy and regaining access to that market is essential for our long-term growth," Tselikis said, adding that Maine is the biggest lobster state in the U.S.

American lobster exports to China cratered last year, dropping to less than \$47 million through November. The exports were worth more than \$138 million in 2018 through the same month. The collapse of the export market followed years of heavy growth spurred in part by the expanding Chinese middle class.

It remains to be seen just how much of the Chinese

market American exporters can get back, said Stephanie Nadeau, owner of The Lobster Co., an Arundel, Maine, exporter. She said she has lost half her workforce due to the trade fight. "We can battle for some of the business back, but some of the business will be permanently gone," Nadeau said. "You don't leave somebody as a supplier for 18 months and have them not find some-

one else." The U.S. lobster industry benefited from the growth of the Chinese market prior to the trade hostilities because fishermen are in the midst of a multi-year boom in lobster hauls. China emerged as a new trade partner in a time when lobstermen were catching more of the crustaceans than ever, and that served to help buoy prices for the seafood. Winter is an especially busy time of year for lobster exports to China because the seafood delicacy is especially popular on the Chinese New Year, which falls on Jan. 25 this year.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said the new agreement "will provide lobstermen and women a more level playing field" and more stable access to China.

But Mary Lovely, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, said it remains to be seen just how much the new pact will benefit U.S. seafood.

"One thing we can say is right now it's a serious de-escalation and it's possible we'll see some relief in seafood," Lovely said. "And that's a good thing." □

Slight gains send Dow Jones Industrial Average above 29,000

By **ALEX VEIGA**

AP Business Writer

The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed above 29,000 points for the first time and the S&P 500 index hit its second record high in three days Wednesday.

The milestones came on a day when the market traded in a narrow range as investors weighed the latest batch of corporate earnings reports and the widely anticipated signing of an initial trade deal between the U.S. and China.

President Donald Trump and China's chief negotiator, Liu He, signed the "Phase 1" deal before a group of corporate executives and reporters at the White House. The pact eases some sanctions on China. In return, Beijing has agreed to step up its pur-



In this Jan. 10, 2020, file photo trader Andrew Silverman works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

Associated Press

chases of U.S. farm products and other goods.

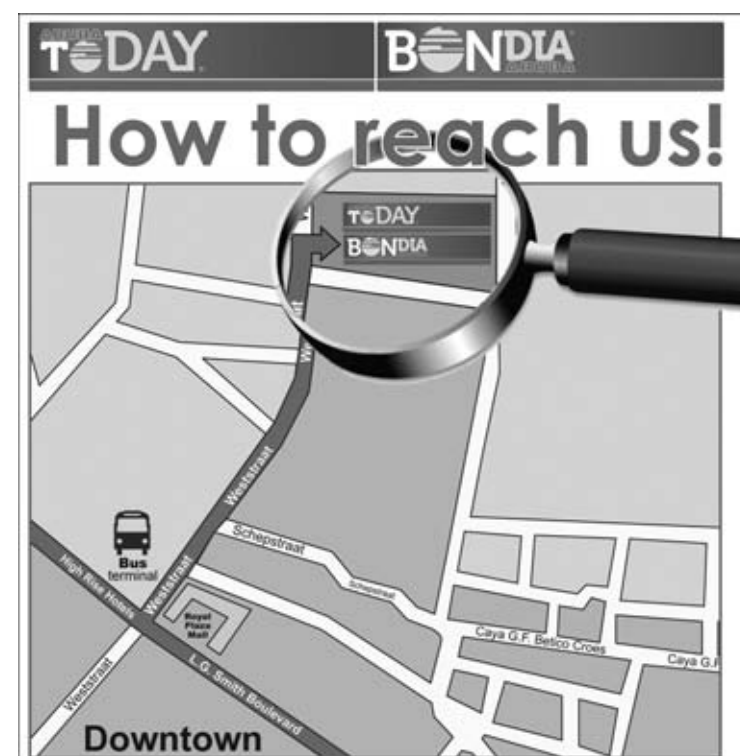
"This was telegraphed well enough that the market is kind of looking through it and toward the next phase and what that means," said Keith Buchanan, portfolio

manager at Globalt Investments.

Health care stocks accounted for much of the market's gains. Utilities and makers of household goods also rose. Those gains outweighed losses in financial

stocks, companies that rely on consumer spending and the energy sector. The S&P 500 index rose 6.14

points, or 0.2%, to 3,289.29. The index also climbed to an all-time high on Monday. □



Mutts



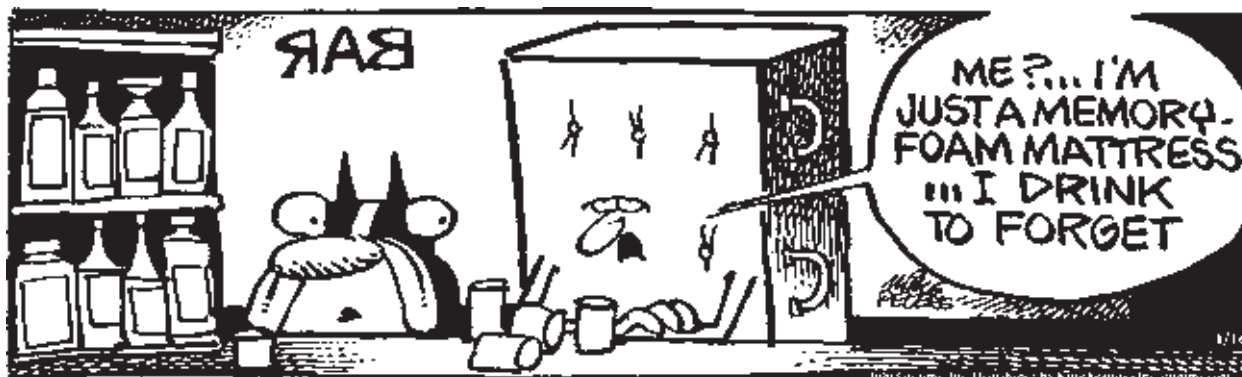
6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

1			5	6		4			8
	5			9				1	
	9			8				7	
3		8					2		5
	7			4				6	
	8			7			4		
9			3	2	1				6

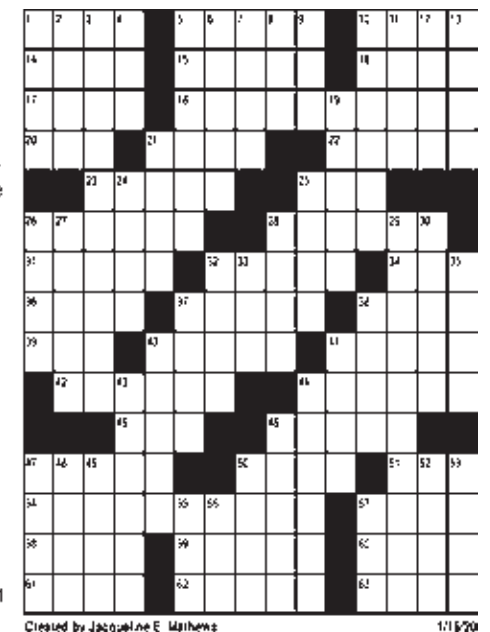
Difficulty Level ★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

9	1	5	2	3	8	7	6	4
4	6	2	7	9	1	5	8	3
8	7	3	6	5	4	9	2	1
6	5	7	9	1	2	4	3	8
2	4	8	5	6	3	1	7	9
3	9	1	8	4	7	2	5	6
7	8	6	4	2	9	3	1	5
1	2	9	3	8	5	6	4	7
5	3	4	1	7	6	8	9	2

- ACROSS**
- Walk around
 - sad-faced
 - Arrange
 - G. Lene razor
 - Deserve
 - Puppy love
 - London's summer
 - Taylor or F. more
 - Disloyal
 - Source of heat
 - light
 - of habeas corpus
 - Despises
 - Piece of garlic
 - Goliath's Paul
 - Impudent
 - Door
 - Place of refuge
 - USNA
 - newcomer
 - Prune store
 - use foul language
 - Lay to attack
 - trial
 - Mongolian desert
 - had lunch
 - Leaves suddenly
 - Bunch of hay
 - Free
 - Orange and black bird
 - Hardwood tree
 - Beekeeper's danger
 - Beg in
 - Despise
 - Leopold's cousin
 - Paint thinner
 - Night dancer
 - upon a time...
 - Estimote
 - hockey player
 - Toy that can't
 - One of three tenses
 - Swerves
 - Live pets' tours



Created by Jacqueline E. Matthews

1/16/20

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

FIND	ODDS	EGGS
ACE OF	REEK	NOAH
METER	DENIGRATE	
EST	OLE	LOOTED
LONER	LOL	
PSEUDO	BEDLAM	
LASTS	KNITS	CAP
U.F.O.S	SEATS	BRIE
GEM	PEEPS	PRONE
REVAMP	DIAPER	
ARE	FILTH	
STALKS	UNO	QAT
CHRISTMAS	TABLE	
OAFS	ENDS	SLIPS
W.I.S.E	ROSY	EAST

- DOWN**
- Cal's dies
 - Hawaiian is and
 - Eugene, Sealine & Charlotte
 - Lamarca's official ang.
 - Result of a lack of vitamin C
 - Orange Muppet
 - Clump of feathers
 - Canada's neighbor: abor
 - Greek letter
 - Creepy
 - strayed
 - heaviest: U.S. president
 - Corrupt man
 - we that ends we
 - is a tavern in the town
 - Sticky pants
 - Flower rings
 - Part of the ear
 - Cola
 - cuisine, fancy dishes
 - Cabbage
 - markers
 - Contrite
 - Deformation in print
 - us: amass
 - Il Be'
 - Bear's h:
 - Laundry soap
 - Next year's Jr now
 - P. U. on weight
 - Sew ightly
 - Cheese with a whitish rind
 - Floor covering
 - Furry swimmers
 - Nol as crazy
 - Hat
 - Black or a bacore
 - Bands of sparks
 - Rank's partner: in phrase
 - Tardy
 - Mertz or
 - Oct's tower
 - Neckwear
 - lift into up a snowy shoe

Classifieds

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Assistant Director

Xiomara Arends

Editor in Chief

Linda Reijnders
(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)
Liza Koolman (Management assistant)

Editors

Richard Brooks
Jeancarlo Trinidad

Sales

Linda Reijnders
(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto
Pilar Flores

Columnists

Anthony Croes
Joris Zantvoort
Shanella Pantophlet
Steve Francees
Thais Franken

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
f @arubatoday

Sun Caribbean Realty
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Week 8/1113; 8/1409 (\$17k/Wk.);
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Halley Time Travel

For Rent

Marriott Ocean club
1 BR Ocean View Platinum
Price : \$3 K each
Date : 03/22/20 to 03/29/20 (3)
03/20/20 to 03/27/20 (2)
02/21/20 to 02/28/20(4)

Marriott Surf Club

2 BR Platinum Ocean Side
Date : 03/6/20 to 03/13/20
Price \$ 4 K

For Rent

Divi Links Golf
2 BR sleep 8 Price : 2 K
Date: 01/18/20 to 01/25/20
Studio sleep 4 Price ; \$1,5 K
02/15/20 to 02/22/20

La Cabana Beach and Casino

1 BR sleep 4 Price : \$ 2 K
01/18/20 to 01/25/20

Marriott Ocean Club

Platinum
1 BR Ocean View \$9 K
1 BR Ocean Front \$20 K
2 BR Ocean View \$17 K
2 BR Ocean Front \$26 K

Marriott Surf Club

Platinum
2 BR Ocean View \$ 15,5 K
2 BR Ocean Side \$16,5 K
2 BR Ocean Front \$ 26 K
3 Br Ocean View \$ 28 K
Platinum Plus \$45 K
2 BR WK 7 Ocean View

Aruba Divi Phoenix

1 BR WK 2 \$17 K
Building 8 Ground floor
32 weeks remain
1 BR WK 8 \$16 K
building 6 on the 4th floor
27 weeks remain

Aruba Divi Phoenix

1 BR PH WK 8/9 \$22 K both
14 th floor 32/22 weeks remain
1 BR WK 11
on the 7 th floor
33 weeks remain \$15 K

Divi Links Golf

1 BR WK 1/2/3 \$30 K
Birdie 2 on the 3rd floor
25 weeks remain each
All 3 weeks together \$30 K
Divi Links Golf
Studio wk 2 \$7,5 K

Eagle 3 with 23 weeks remain

1 BR WK 3 \$8,5 K
Eagle 3 with 23 weeks remain
1 BR WK 8/9 \$9,5 K each
Eagle 9 with 27/19 weeks remain

Divi Links Golf

2 BR WK 3 \$ 22 K
1 BR wk #4 Birdie 2 on 2nd floor
19 weeks remain \$8.5K
Eagle 8 with 25 weeks remain
Studio WK 6 \$7,5 K
Building F 22 weeks remain

Divi Links Golf

Studio WK 1 \$7,5 K
building 4 with 28 weeks remain
Studio Wk 5 , 7 and 8 \$ 8 K each
Birdie 4 with 28/27/29 weeks remain

Divi Village

1 BR WK 1 \$8,5 K
Studio WK 1 \$7,5 K
Building D & F
25 weeks on each
Studio WK 1 \$7,5 K
Ground floor Building C
33 weeks remain

Paradise Beach Villas

1 BR WK 1 & 2 \$20 K both
2 sd floor pool/ocean view
Renaissance Suites
1 BR WK 10 /11 \$8,5 K each
5th floor garden view
Barcelo All inclusive
1 BR WK 8 \$15 K

Eagle Resorts

1 BR WK 5,6,7,8 \$7,5 K each
Ground floor Saturday check in
1 BR WK 7 \$7,5 K
1 BR WK 8 \$7,5 K

Caribbean Palm Village

1 BR WK 2 \$6 K
1 BR/2 BR WK 3 \$7 K
1 BR WK 3/4 \$6 K each
2 BR WK 5/6 \$7 K each

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10 min from town and beach
4 BR 3 Bath Pool \$370 K

Tierra Del Sol

3 BR 2 Bath \$520 K

Le Vent Condo

3 BR , 2 Bath \$650 K



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San Nicolas

IMSAN 24 Hours
Tel. 524 8833

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Oranjestad:
Oduber Tel. 582 1780
San Nicolas:
Seroe Preto Tel. 584 4833

OTHER

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
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Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
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Fever chart: Earth had its hottest decade on record in 2010s

By **SETH BORENSTEIN**

AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The decade that just ended was by far the hottest ever measured on Earth, capped off by the second-warmest year on record, two U.S. agencies reported Wednesday. And scientists said they see no end to the way man-made climate change keeps shattering records.

"If you think you've heard this story before, you haven't seen anything yet," Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, said at the close of a decade plagued by raging wildfires, melting ice and extreme weather that researchers have repeatedly tied to human activity.

Schmidt said Earth as a whole is probably the hottest it has been during the Holocene — the past 11,500 years or so — meaning this could be the warmest period since the dawn of civilization.

But scientists' estimates of ancient global temperatures, based on tree rings, ice cores and other telltale signs, are not precise enough to say that with certainty.

The 2010s averaged 58.4 degrees Fahrenheit (14.7 degrees Celsius) worldwide, or 1.4 degrees (0.8 C) higher than the 20th century average and more than one-third of a degree (one-fifth of a degree C) warmer than the previous decade, which had been the hottest on record, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The decade had eight of the 10 hottest years on record. The only other years in the top 10 were 2005 and 1998.



In this May 14, 2016, file photo, boys on their way to play cricket walk through a dried patch of Chandola Lake in Ahmadabad, India.

Associated Press

NASA and NOAA also calculated that 2019 was the second-hottest year in the 140 years of record-keeping.

Five other global teams of monitoring scientists agreed, based on temperature readings taken on Earth's surface, while various satellite-based measurements said it was anywhere from the hottest year on record to the third-hottest.

Several scientists said the coming years will be even hotter, knocking these years out of the record books.

"This is going to be part of what we see every year until we stabilize greenhouse gases" from the burning of coal, oil and gas, Schmidt said.

"It's sobering to think that we might be breaking global temperature records in quick succession," said Georgia Tech climate scientist Kim Cobb.

"2020 is off to a horrifying

climate start, and I fear what the rest of the year will bring to our doorsteps." NASA's Schmidt said that overall, Earth is now about 1.2 degrees C (nearly 2.2 F) hotter since the beginning of the industrial age, a number that is important because in 2015 global leaders adopted a goal of preventing 1.5 C (2.7 F) of warming since the rise of big industry in the mid- to late 1800s.

He said that shows the global goal can't be achieved. (NOAA and the World Meteorological Organization put the warming since the dawn of industry slightly lower.)

"We have strong human-induced global warming," said Friederike Otto, a climate scientist at the University of Oxford. "What we observe here is exactly what our physical understanding tells us to expect and there is no other explanation."

Other explanations that rely on natural causes —

extra heat from the sun, more reflection of sunlight because of volcanic particles in atmosphere, and just random climate variations — "are all much too small to explain the long-term trend," Princeton University climate scientist Michael Oppenheimer said. Scientists said the the decade-long data is more telling than the year-to-year measurements, where natural variations such as El Nino, the periodic warming of the Pacific Ocean, come into play.

"Human-caused climate change is responsible for the long-term warming — it's responsible for why the 2010s were warmer than 2000s, which were warmer than the 1990s, etc.," Texas A&M University climate scientist Andrew Dessler said in an email.

"But humans are not responsible for why 2016 was warmer than 2015 or why 2019 was warmer than 2018."

NOAA said the average global temperature in 2019 was 58.7 degrees (14.85 C), or just a few hundredths of a degree behind 2016, when the world got extra heat from El Nino.

That's 1.71 degrees (0.95 C) higher than the 20th century average and 2.08 degrees (1.16 C) warmer than the late 19th century.

Parts of Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa and South America had record-high temperatures in 2019, as did Alaska, New Zealand and New Mexico, NOAA said.

Alaska was 6.2 degrees warmer than average, at 32.2 F.

It was the first time in recorded history that Alaska's average annual temperature was above freezing.

The United States, which had only its 34th-warmest year, was nevertheless hit by 14 weather disasters that caused \$1 billion or more in damage last year, according to NOAA.

Globally the past five years stand out as the hottest five on record, nearly 1.7 degrees (0.9 C) warmer than the 20th century average.

The last year Earth was cooler than the 20th century average was 1976, before Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg, French President Emmanuel Macron and Donald Trump Jr. were born.

If you want to know what this means for people and the world, just look at wildfire-stricken Australia, Schmidt and others said.

Global warming is already being seen in heat waves, ice sheet melt, more wildfires, stronger storms, flood-inducing downpours and accelerating sea level rise, said Hans-Otto Portner, who heads the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change team that looks at the impact of climate change.

Sea ice both in the Arctic and Antarctic reached their second-lowest levels in 40 years of monitoring, NOAA reported.

Dr. Renee Salas, a Boston emergency room physician and Harvard professor who studies climate change's effects on health, said "these temperatures are not just statistics but have names and stories," mentioning a construction worker and an elderly man with no air conditioning who were her patients this summer.

"The planet has a fever," Salas said, "and that's its symptom." □

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New book of Zora Neale Hurston stories is out this week

By HILLEL ITALIE

AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Sixty years after her death, the story of Zora Neale Hurston is still not fully told.

The fiction writer-anthropologist-folklorist died in a segregated Florida hospital in January 1960, so forgotten and impoverished that her work was out of print and her grave left unmarked. Starting in the 1970s, when Alice Walker helped revive interest in Hurston, the writer's standing has grown through a steady reissue of such classics as the novel "Their Eyes Were Watching God" and the posthumous releases of stories, letters and other writings. The Library of America, the country's unofficial shaper of the canon, has issued a volume of her work.

New projects continue and interest in her remains strong as ever. In 2018, Amistad published "Barracon," a long-lost nonfiction work about a survivor of the Middle Passage that became a bestseller and sold more than 250,000 copies.

This week, Amistad has released "Hitting a Straight Lick With a Crooked Stick," a highly anticipated collection of early stories that includes material rarely seen since published nearly a century ago.

"We can all agree that the end of Hurston's life was difficult," the novelist Tayari Jones writes in the foreword. "We can all agree that she deserved her lau-

rels while she still walked among us. Yet Zora, being Zora, did not let mere death end her life."

The 21 stories in "Hitting a Straight Lick" were compiled by Genevieve West, who chairs the English department at Texas Woman's University. West combines better known pieces such as the tragic "John Redding Goes to Sea," Hurston's first published fiction, with more obscure work. Hurston is identified with rural Florida, the setting for "Their Eyes Were Watching God." But the current collection highlights a less explored side — her stories in the North, drawing upon her years in New York.

Hurston was born in Notasulga, Alabama, in 1891 and moved with her family to Florida at age 3. She later worked as a maid, waitress and other jobs before enrolling at Howard University in 1920. Five years later, Hurston moved to Manhattan in 1925 and lived off and on there until the late 1930s. She would come to be identified with the Harlem Renaissance, but she was ever an iconoclast who stood apart from her peers and the so-called "New Negro" movement of the time.

"The New Negro movement was about putting the best foot forward and that wasn't Hurston's agenda," West says.

The story "The Back Room," which West found in the archives of the black newspaper The Pittsburgh Cou-

rier, stands out as the rare fictional commentary by Hurston on the movement and upper class Harlem society. Its main character, Lilya Barkman, is wealthy enough to have commissioned an oil painting of herself. The Harlem in "The Back Room" is a site for "fine gowns and tuxedos, marcel waves and glitter."

"And Lilya Barkman shown and glittered with the rest," Hurston writes.

Other Harlem stories tell of unfaithful husbands, wives abused but unbroken, couples held together or torn apart by money, families torn between old and new ways. The migration from South to North is a puzzle for some characters, like the wife in "The Country in the Woman" who sees her husband succumb to New York morals, or the young woman from Eatonville in "Muttsy" who takes in the Harlem scene and observes that the "ladies" back home "didn't put powder and paint on the face." Lilya Barkman herself "fled the boredom" of small-town South Carolina, only to have her heart broken in Harlem.

West says that Hurston was alert to the "dangers" of migration and that for her "the bloom was off the rose" by the time she left in the 1930s.

"New York had sunk into the Great Depression," West says. "She had no illusions it was the promoted land."

The latest posthumous Hurston book will not likely be



This image released by Amistad shows the cover of "Hitting a Straight Lick with a Corcked Stick," by Zora Neale Hurston.

Associated Press

the last. West says that her essays have yet have to be compiled and other stories may still be discovered, if only because Hurston's work often ran in publications that have long ended and have yet to be fully indexed.

Cheryl A. Wall, a professor of English at Rutgers University who edited the Hurston Library of America edition, says that the author's writ-

ings essentially had to be organized from scratch. At the time of her death, her papers were scattered around the country. Some materials were only preserved when a passerby saw they were being burned in the trash and removed them in time.

"The pages of her last manuscript, 'Herod, the Great' are singed along the edges," Wall said. □

Stephen King criticized for comments on diversity

NEW YORK (AP) — Stephen King says he cares only about "quality," not "diversity" when deciding on awards. Some are asking why he thinks the two must be different.

"I would never consider diversity in matters of art. Only quality," King tweeted this week. "It seems to me that to do otherwise would be wrong."

The best-selling author's comments came shortly after the announcement of this year's nominees for the



This May 22, 2018 file photo shows Stephen King at the 2018 PEN Literary Gala in New York.

Associated Press

Academy Awards, widely criticized for only choosing male directors and for an almost entirely white group of acting finalists. King wrote that he had been allowed to nominate people for best picture, best screenplay and best original screenplay, and that for him "the diversity issue — as it applies to individual actors and directors, anyway — did not come up." A spokeswoman from Scribner, King's publisher, said Wednesday that for now

no further comment from him was expected.

Admirers of King, an outspoken liberal, were disheartened by his comments. Author Roxane Gay tweeted that "as a fan, this is painful to read."

"It implies that diversity and quality cannot be synonymous," Gay wrote. "They are not separate things. Quality is everywhere but most industries only believe in quality from one demographic. And now, here you are." □

'Bad Boys for Life' is kinda bad. Whatcha gonna do?

By **MARK KENNEDY**

The third edition of the "Bad Boys" franchise starts as it must do: With a gleaming Porsche swerving at impossible speeds through Miami traffic under the expert control of Will Smith, with Martin Lawrence growing very sick beside him. The engine snarls, the car repeatedly fishtails and strains. Smith looks over to his partner with alarm and points out that the interior

of the sports car is hand-stitched leather. Lawrence's cheeks bulge; he's about to hurl: "You better drink it," the driver barks. All is good. We've again got Smith's cocksure Detective Mike Lowrey beside Lawrence's more cautious Marcus Burnett. There's the customary playful banter between opposites. We've got sunny, titillating Miami and we are inches from death but really never that



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Martin Lawrence, right, and Will Smith in a scene from "Bad Boys for Life."

Associated Press

close. We're in our '90s comfort zone. You can almost hear it: "Bad boys, bad boys/Whatcha gonna do, whatcha gonna do/When they come for you?" So it's so disappointing that "Bad Boys for Life" soon swerves into weird neighborhoods and gets bloated as it tries to get deep, trying to explore topics like religion, mortality, biological determinism, individual legacy and aging. It's oddly flat and unfunny and has strayed so far from its gritty roots that it might be called "Bad Boys for Life Insurance." Sure, you can't stay still. Smith and Lawrence are both past 50 and their characters can't keep to the same formula of "muscle shirts and body counts," as Burnett argues. But do we really want Burnett to straight-faced tell a Buddhist parable about a horse and then ask Lowrey about how he can overcome his own trauma: "Where are you going, Mike?"

The first film in the franchise hit theaters 25 years ago, giving us foreign baddies with beepers, Tea Leoni in little skirts, many, many bricks of heroin and an exploding airplane hanger. Eight years later came "Bad Boys II," a slicker flick with slow-mo sideways shooting, a feisty Gabrielle Union in a white suit, the annihilation of many cars and many, many ecstasy pills. "Bad Boys for Life" doesn't have drugs — if you don't count Viagra jokes — but instead has a murder plot to assassinate everyone connected with an old drug case

Lowrey worked on before he teamed up with Burnett. Someone is out for revenge and they are exposing skeletons in Lowrey's closet, uncovering a backstory inconsistent to the Lowrey we have come to know. We add cliches — a team of smart, young, sassy cops — on top of some twists worthy of Shakespeare. Adil El Arbi and Bilal Fallah have taken over from Michael Bay in the director's chair but the look of the film essentially mimics its predecessors, with saturated colors, quick cuts, muscular stunts and lots of pretty women. An understated Vanessa Hudgens plays a cool cop and Kate Del Castillo is on the opposite side in more than one sense, playing an absolutely unhinged cartel boss wife who uses witchcraft. Joe Pantoliano returns as the Pepto-swinging detectives' boss and DJ Khaled has a small role as well as putting together the lively soundtrack.

There are sly references to the previous films — a private conversation between the detectives is accidentally broadcast as in the second film and rats make an encore performance in the new one — but the filmmakers have forgotten that what makes this franchise work: The interaction of Smith and Lawrence in stressed environments. So often in the new film they are separate, dealing with their own stuff. "Bad Boys" only works when the bickering cops are center stage.

Age has taken its toll: Burnett is a grandfather now who needs glasses and is eyeing retirement, while Lowrey is unsettled, still a playboy but a wistful one who colors his goatee black with hair dye. (Yes, there are colonoscopy jokes in this film.) Lowrey is having second thoughts about one flame who got away: Paola Nunez, who plays a fellow cop. A crisis forces Burnett to make a vow to God. Hell is a topic discussed — "darkness that swallows you whole." We are a long way from the time Burnett was shot in the keister by his partner.

The convoluted plot keeps finding false endings that just lead to bigger outlandish stunts — many, many helicopters and motorcycles — until it ends in a rundown palace in Mexico City with a fiery conclusion that goes to cartoonish, very Bay-ish lengths. Smith and Lawrence are far from home, on foot and facing a military-style ambush. It is a franchise that has lost its way.

A potential sequel is hinted at during the end credits but it's hard to believe a fourth episode could save the "Bad Boy" legacy. Still, as long as Smith and Lawrence are willing to pair up again, "whatcha gonna do when they come for you?"

"Bad Boys for Life," a Columbia Pictures release, is rated R for strong, bloody violence, language throughout, sexual references and brief drug use. Running time: 124 minutes. □

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Reporters claim new rules will hinder impeachment coverage

by ASHRAF KHALIL

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's impeachment trial in the Senate promises to be one of the most heavily scrutinized events in American political history. But the journalists covering the trial are warning that restrictions on media access will cripple their ability to do their job. "The proposed restrictions exceed those put in place during the State of the Union, Inauguration Day or even during the Clinton impeachment trial 20 years ago," Sarah Wire, a Los Angeles Times reporter who heads the Standing Committee of Correspondents, wrote Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and Senate Minority leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

A preliminary security plan would greatly limit the movement of credentialed media members. Journalists would be restricted to a designated area and could only speak to senators who approached them. Under normal conditions, credentialed journalists can informally approach lawmakers in the hallways or on the way to the elevator or the Senate subway.

"That's the bread and butter of what we do here. That's where you get that extra nugget of informa-



The entrance to the Senate cloakroom at the Capitol is seen in Washington, early Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020, as the House is set to vote to send the articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump to the Senate for a landmark trial on whether the charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress are grounds for his removal.

tion," Wire said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Members of the press corps are also asking for a waiver of the traditional ban on laptops and cellphones, which would enable them to file breaking news updates from gallery seats inside the Senate chamber, but that request has apparently been rejected. The security plan would also place a magnetometer at the door of the gallery seats to scan journalists as they enter and prevent

them from bringing in electronics.

Between the magnetometer and the constant need for journalists to leave and reenter the chamber in order to file stories, Wire wrote on Twitter that "the Senate trial will have a soundtrack of 'beep, beep, beep' as 90+ reporters walk in and out all day."

Members of the press corps met last week with representatives from the office of the Senate Sergeant at Arms, seeking clarification on how the proposed

restrictions would actually enhance security. Wire said the meeting ended inconclusively and that the journalists' requests have been largely ignored.

"Right now we're just getting silence," she said.

Sen. Roy Blunt, the chairman of the Senate Rules Committee, said the changes are necessary to keep the emotional and intense impeachment proceedings running smoothly. Blunt, R-Mo., told reporters on Tuesday that keeping senators from being

mobbed in the hallways was "a legitimate concern" and that legislators need to be able to handle their historic duties "without having to fight their way onto an elevator." But the plan has also drawn criticism from senators from both parties. "I'm a staunch believer in the first amendment and I think this is wrong," said Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, a member of the Senate Rules committee, in an interview with CBS News after participating in Tuesday's presidential debate. "I don't know why, at this very important moment where you would want to allow the people to see it, they're deciding to pull back access. I have my own theories, of course, and they're not good ones."

Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., called the restrictions "a huge mistake" and said they seemed designed to shield senators from having to deal with crowds of journalists in the hallways.

"There is an effort to limit the press," Kennedy told The Associated Press. "Senators are grown women and grown men. If they don't want to make a comment they know how to say, 'No comment.'"

Efforts to contact the Capitol Police and the Senate Sergeant at Arms for comment were unsuccessful. □

Associated Press

Review: Marcus King stirs soul, rock, country on 'El Dorado'

By PABLO GORONDI

Associated Press

Marcus King's solo debut is an enticing mix of deep soul, rock and country in the best Southern traditions.

King, though just 23 years old, has been a professional musician for over a decade and already has three albums with the Marcus King Band.

Produced and co-written by Dan Auerbach of The Black Keys, "El Dorado" is a smoothly-paced release, with acoustic-based and mid-tempo soul tunes amid a few fuzzy rockers with

cutting guitars and rumbling bass.

You could say King has been "Auerbached," with the producer's distinct approach — shaped by recording in his own Easy Eye Sound Studio in Nashville and relying on the timeless talent of legends like drummer Gene Chrisman, bassist David Roe and Bobby Wood's Wurliizer — putting a definitely noticeable but elegantly unintrusive frame around King's own skills.

Auerbach won a Grammy way back in 2013 for his production work, and his quality control hasn't let up

since. This project follows, in a similar vein, some of his recent efforts on outstanding albums by Yola, The Pretenders, Robert Finley and Kendell Marvel.

King is known for his volcanic vocals and his amazing six-string dexterity. But "El Dorado" finds King, a South Carolina native now based in Nashville, mostly dialing down the overall volume without sacrificing intensity or feeling. By putting his songwriting and more nuanced singing at the fore, King expands his guitar hero profile with excellent results. □



This cover image released by Fantasy Records shows "El Dorado" by Marcus King.

Associated Press

Why U.S. classrooms are starting to resemble arcades

By **MICHAEL MELIA**

Associated Press
WALLINGFORD, Conn.

(AP) — It's 1 o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon in Wallingford, Connecticut, and about 20 children are watching a screen at the front of the room as they take turns navigating challenges and collecting virtual currency to unlock powers, outfits and pets for their characters.

The game they're playing has some similarities to the online battle game "Fortnite." But the kids aren't fighting one another — they're racking up points for participation and good behavior in their classroom at Dag Hammarskjöld Middle School, where their teacher is presenting a home economics lesson with help from Classcraft, a fantasy-themed educational program.

"It's actually a lot of fun," said 13-year-old Caiden McManus. "The pets — that's my favorite thing to do. To train the pets, you gain as many gold pieces as possible so you can get the new outfits and stuff." Peek inside your average classroom these days, and you're likely to see teachers using apps, websites and software that borrow elements from video games to connect with students living technology-infused lives. By all accounts, they're fun to use, and studies have found that some can be effective. But there is also skepticism about how often students who use them are better educated, or just better entertained.

Dag Hammarskjöld consumer sciences teacher Gianna Gurga said she had been looking for a way to get more out of her students. Students have been more motivated and performed better in her classes since she began using Classcraft in spring 2017, she said, and she has signed up a handful of other teachers in the school. "My kids are so addicted to it in the best way possible," Gurga said.

In one session, the classroom filled with suspenseful music as Gurga began



In this Sept. 20, 2018 photo, fifth grade teacher Heather Dalton, center, works with students Julian Ryno, left, and Ma'Kenley Burns, doing math problems on the DreamBox system at Charles Barnum Elementary School in Groton, Conn.

Associated Press

rapid-fire questioning. With each correct answer, chosen from multiple choices on the screen, students gained points that could be used for avatar upgrades, privileges like listening to music in class, and a competition against other classrooms. The available characters — warriors, mages and healers — each have different powers and must collaborate to succeed.

Points are awarded for class participation as well as good behavior, but the kids can also be penalized, as was the case for one of Gurga's seventh-graders

who told a classmate to "shut up."

A middle school in New York City, Quest to Learn, was the first public school to fully embrace game-based learning when it opened nearly a decade ago. The Manhattan school, developed by game theorists with the Institute of Play, has been closely followed since by researchers hoping for hard evidence of results from technology-inspired gamification.

In the last school year, 43 percent of Quest to Learn's students were up to state standards on the state English test, compared to 41

percent citywide, and 29 percent of its students met state standards on the state math test, compared to 33 percent citywide. But advocates say standardized testing alone does not tell the story. Outside studies have shown growth in soft skills such as collaboration, creative thinking and empathy, according to Ross Flatt, director of programs and partnerships for the Institute of Play, a nonprofit studio that uses game design principles to develop new learning experiences. To help educators identify programs with promise, the Johns Hopkins University Center for Research and Reform in Education launched a website that rates math and learning programs based on how they meet evidence standards for effectiveness under federal education law. The center's director, Robert Slavin, said there are some programs that have shown positive impacts but on average improvements are small.

"When people talk about technology transforming everything, it may in the future, but it's not there yet," Slavin said.

Some question whether the graphics, videos and sounds in so many programs are doing harm by teaching students to pur-

sue the rewards. "Part of life is figuring out how to learn to love things and how to persevere in things even when it's not extrinsically motivated," said Christopher Devers, an education researcher at Johns Hopkins who said his review of the evidence suggests that on balance, games-based approaches tend to influence students in negative ways.

One of the better known programs, DreamBox, teaches math by offering a series of problems that can grow increasingly challenging as the student enters correct answers. The program, which began as an app for consumers, entered the school market in 2011 and last year had 2.6 million student users. The company charges a fee of \$7,500 per school building per year.

DreamBox CEO Jessie Woolley-Wilson said the program is intended as an aid for teachers who can't be expected to personalize learning for two dozen students simultaneously.

"Let's figure out a way to support a way to deliver the best teaching, and allow the learning guardian to get back to art of teaching," she said. "Technology can deliver that math personalization in a way that can give the learning guardian actionable insights."

In Groton, Connecticut, early users of DreamBox reported anecdotal evidence of improved outcomes and schools are now using it district-wide. In Heather Dalton's fifth-grade classroom at the Charles Barnum Elementary School, students spent the first half of a recent class working individually on DreamBox with headphones on. Information about their level of mastery of fractions was sent to Dalton's laptop, but the students were most excited about the short video-game rewards they received between levels and the coins they gathered for upgrades to their avatars. "There's a lot of learning," Dalton said, "but it feels like a game to the kids." □



In this May 23, 2018 photo, teacher Gianna Gurga, left, speaks to students Faith Broadway, center, and Maisha Chowdhury, right, as she leads a class on financial literacy at Dag Hammarskjöld Middle School in Wallingford, Conn.

Associated Press